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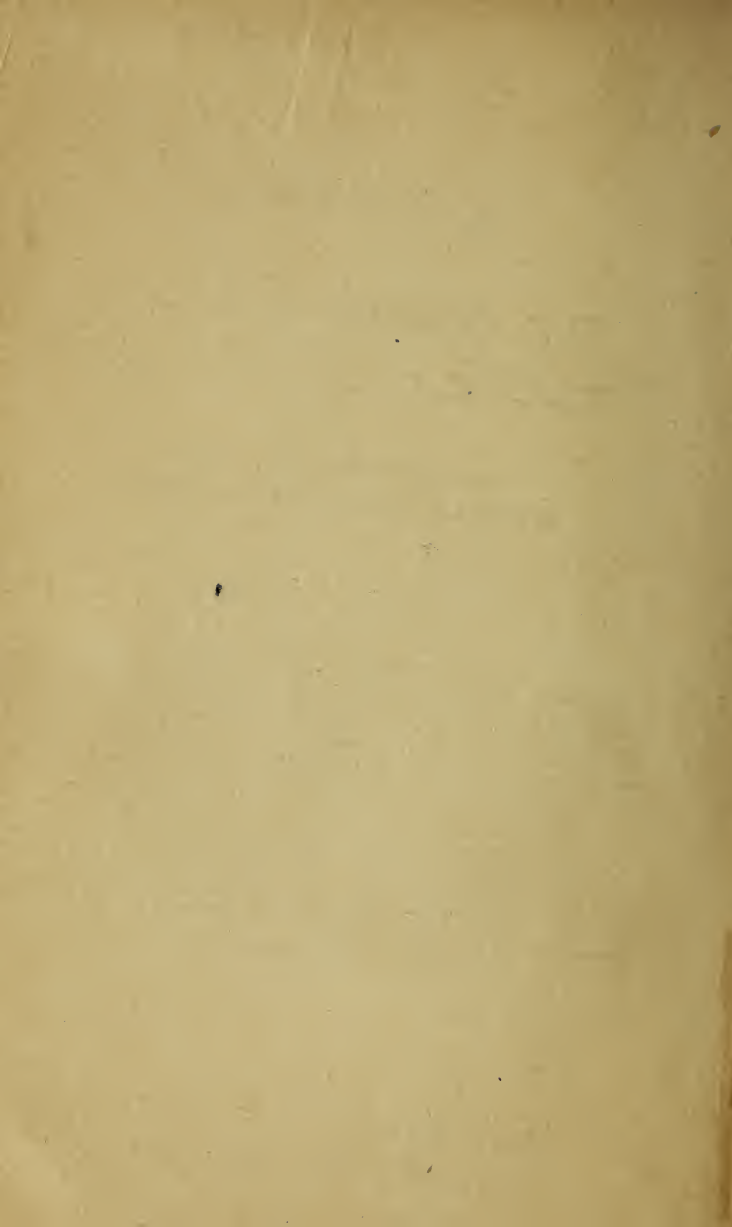
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CONSUELO.

A NOVEL.

BY GEORGE SAND.

AUTHOR OF "THE COUNTESS OF RUDOLSTADT," "INDIANA," "THE CORSAIR,"
"FANCHON, THE CRICKET; OR, LA PETITE FADETTE," "THE LAST ALDINI,"
"JEALOUSY; OR, TEVERINO," "FIRST AND TRUE LOVE," "SIMON," ETC.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH
BY FAYETTE ROBINSON.

"CONSUELO," by George Sand, stands in the very highest niche accorded to fiction. It is an artistic and ideal romance of colossal power and fascination. Treating largely of music and musicians, it has an interest for the cultured altogether peculiar to itself, while it is so intensely human and realistic in every detail that it, at the same time, appeals strongly to the feelings of the general reader. The plot is grandly woven, and many of the scenes are weird and thrilling almost beyond description. Consuelo is an angelic character, with a pure and lofty soul, yet she is constantly beset with temptations and surrounded by perils. She is an ideal creation, one of the noblest beings ever drawn, as chaste and elevated a woman as we have ever loved and admired in all fiction. The operatic scenes breathe the breath of real life, the scenes with Count Albert in the cavern of the Schreckenstein bewilder and astound, and the heroine's flight to Vienna is picturesque and adventurous in the extreme. All the characters seem real beings, and their diversity shows the great author's remarkable knowledge of humanity. The whole book is written with rare power and delicacy. It is universally admitted to be the master-piece of one of the most wonderful novelists of the age. "CONSUELO" should be read by everybody, as, no doubt, it will be in its present cheap but attractive shape.

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CONSUELO.

CHAPTER I.

"Yes, yes, young ladies, toss your heads as much as you please; the wisest and best among you is——But I shall not say it; for she is the only one of my class who has a particle of modesty, and I should fear, were I to name her, that she would forthwith lose that uncommon virtue which I could wish to see in you——"

"In nomine Patriæ, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti,"

sang Costanza, impudently.

"Amen!" exclaimed all the other girls, in chorus.

"Vile slanderer," said Clorinda, making a pretty little mouth at him, and giving the bony and wrinkled fingers, which the singing master had suffered to rest idly on the keys of the silent instrument, a little tap with the handle of her fan.

"Go on, young ladies—go on," said the old professor, with the resigned and submissive air of one who for forty years had had to suffer for six hours daily the airs and contradictions of successive generations of female pupils. "It is not the less true," added he, putting his spectacles into their case, and his snuff-box into his pocket, without raising his eyes towards the angry and railing group, "that this chaste, this docile, this studious, this attentive, this good child, is not you, Signora Clorinda: nor you, Signora Costanza; nor you either, Signora Zulletta: neither is it Rosina; and still less Michela——"

"In that case, it is I!"

"No it is I!"

"By no means; it is I!"

"'Tis I!"

"'Tis I!" screamed out all at once, with their clear and thrilling voices, some fifty fair or dark-haired girls, darting like a flock of sea-birds on some poor shell-fish left stranded by the waves.

The shell-fish, that is to say, the master—and I maintain that no other metaphor could so well express his angular movements, his filmy eyes, his red-streaked cheeks, and more especially the innumerable stiff, white, and pointed curls of professional periwig, the master, I say, compelled thrice to seat himself after he had risen to go away, sat calm and indifferent as the shell-fish itself, rocked and hardened

the storms, had long to be entreated to declare what of his pupils deserved the praises of which he was usually so sparing, but of which he now showed himself so prodigal. At last, yielding as if with regret to the entreaties which his sarcasm had provoked, he took the roll with which he was in the habit of marking the time, and made use of it to separate and range in two lines his unruly row. Then, advancing with a serious air between the double row of these light-headed creatures, he proceeded toward the organ-loft, and stopped before a little figure who was seated, bent down, on one of the steps. She, with her elbows on her knees, and her fingers in her ears, in order not to be distracted by the noise, and twisted into a sort of coil, like a squirrel sinking to sleep, coned over her lessons in a low voice, so as to disturb no one. He, solemn and triumphant, with leg advanced and outstretched arm, seemed like the shepherd Paris awarding the apple, not to the most beautiful, but to the most modest.

"Consuelo! the Spaniard!" exclaimed all the young choristers, struck at first with the utmost surprise, but almost immediately joining in a general burst of laughter, such as Homer attributes to the gods of Olympus, and which caused a blush of anger and indignation on the majestic countenance of the professor.

Little Consuelo, with her closed ears, had heard nothing of this dialogue. Her eyes were bent on vacancy, and, busied with her task, she remained some moments unconscious of the uproar. Then, perceiving herself the object of general attention, she dropped her hands on her knees, allowed her book to fall on the floor, and, petrified with astonishment, not unmixed with fear, rose at length, and looked around, in order to see what ridiculous person or thing afforded matter for such noisy mirth.

"Consuelo," said the master, taking her hand without further explanation, "come, my good child, and sing me the '*Salve Regina*' of Pergolese, which thou hast learned but a fortnight, and which Clorinda has been studying for more than a year."

Consuelo, without replying, and without evincing either pride, shame, or embarrassment, followed the singing-master to the organ, where, sitting down, he struck with an air of triumph the key-note for his young pupil. Then Consuelo, with unaffected simplicity and ease, raised her clear and thrilling voice, and filled the lofty roof with the sweetest and purest notes with which it had ever echoed. She sang the "*Salve Regina*" without a single error—without venturing upon one note which was not just, full, sustained, or interrupted at the proper place; and, following with unvarying precision the instructions which the learned master had given her, fulfilling with her clear perceptions his precise and correct intentions, she accomplished, with the inexperience and indifference of a child, that which science, practice, and enthusiasm had not perhaps done for the most perfect singer. In a word, she sang to admiration.

"It is well, my child," said the good old master, always chary of his praise. "You have studied with attention that which you have faithfully performed. Next time you shall repeat the cantata of *Scarlatti* which I have taught you."

"*Si, Signor Profesor,*" replied Consuelo—"now may I go?"

"Yes, my dear. Young ladies, the lesson is over."

Consuelo placed in her little basket her music and crayons, as well as her black fan—the inseparable companion alike of Spaniard and Venetian—which she never used, although she never went without

It. Then disappearing behind the fretwork of the organ, she flew as lightly as a bird down the mysterious stairs which led to the body of the cathedral, knelt for a moment in crossing the nave, and, when just on the point of leaving the church, found beside the font a handsome young man, who, smiling, presented the holy water to her. She took some of it, looking at him all the time with the self-possession of a little girl who knows and feels that she is not yet a woman, and mingling her thanks and her devotional gesture in so agreeable a fashion that the signor could not help laughing outright. Consuelo began to laugh likewise; but, all at once, as if she had recollected that some one was waiting for her, she cleared the porch and the steps at a bound, and was off in an instant.

In the mean time, the professor again replaced his spectacles in his huge waistcoat pocket, and thus addressed his silent scholars:—

"Shame upon you, my fair pupils!" said he. "This little girl, the youngest of you all—the youngest in the whole class—is the only one of you capable of executing a solo. And in the choruses, no matter what tricks are played on every side of her, I always find her firm and steady as a note of the harpsichord. It is because she has zeal, patience, and—what you will never have, no, not one of you—a conscience!"

"Ah! now the murder is out," cried Costanza, as soon as the professor had left the church. "He only repeated it some thirty-nine times during the lesson, and now, I verily believe, he would fall ill if he did not get saying it the fortieth."

"A great wonder, indeed, that this Consuelo should get on!" exclaimed Zuletta: "she is so poor that she must work to learn something whereby to earn her bread."

"They tell me her mother was a gipsy," said Michelina, "and that the little one sang about the streets and highways before she came here. To be sure, she has not a bad voice; but then she has not a particle of intelligence, poor girl! She learns merely by rote; she follows to the letter the professor's instructions,—and her lungs do the rest."

"If she had the best lungs in the world, and the best brains into the bargain," said the handsome Clorinda, "I would not give my face in exchange for hers."

"I do not know that you would lose so much," replied Costanza, who had not had a very exalted opinion of Clorinda's beauty.

"She is not pretty for all that," said another. "She is as yellow as a paschal candle. Her great eyes say just nothing at all, and then she is always so ill dressed! She is decidedly ugly."

"Poor girl! she is much to be pitied—no money—no beauty?"

Thus finished the praises of Consuelo. They comforted themselves by their contemptuous pity, for having been forced to admire her singing.

CHAPTER II.

THE scene just related took place in Venice about a hundred years ago, in the church of the Mendicanti, where the celebrated master Porpora had just rehearsed the grand-vespers which he was

to direct on the following Assumption-day. The young choristers whom he had so smartly scolded were pupils of the state schools, in which they were instructed at the expense of government, and afterwards received a dowry preparatory to marriage or the cloister, as Jean Jacques Rousseau, who admired their magnificent voices at the same period and in the same church, has observed. He mentions the circumstance in the charming episode in the eighth book of his Confessions. I shall not here transcribe those two delightful pages, lest the friendly reader, whose example under similar circumstances I should certainly imitate, might be unable to resume my own. Hoping, then, that the aforesaid Confessions are not at hand, I continue my narrative.

All those young ladies were not equally poor. Notwithstanding the strictness of the administration, it is certain that some gained admission, to whom it was a matter of speculation rather than of need to receive an artistic education at the expense of the republic. For this reason it was that some permitted themselves to forget the sacred laws of equality, thanks to which, they had been enabled to take their seats clandestinely along with their poorer sisters. All, therefore, did not fulfil the intentions of the austere republic respecting their future lot. From time to time there were numbers who, having received their gratuitous education, renounced their dowry to seek a more brilliant fortune elsewhere. The administration, seeing that this was inevitable, had sometimes admitted to the course of instruction the children of poor artists, whose wandering existence did not permit them a long stay in Venice. Among this number was the little Consuelo, who was born in Spain and had come thence to Italy by the route of St. Petersburg, Constantinople, Mexico, Archangel, or any other still more direct, after the eccentric fashion of the gipsies.

Nevertheless, she hardly merited this appellation: for she was neither Hindoo nor gipsy, any more than of any of the tribes of Israel. She was of good Spanish blood—doubtless with a tinge of the Moresco; and though somewhat swarthy, she had a tranquillity of manner which was quite foreign to any of the wandering races. I do not wish to say anything ill of the latter. If I had invented the character of Consuelo, I do not say but that I would have traced her parentage from Israel, or even farther; but she was altogether, as everything about her organization betrayed, of the family of Ishmael. To be sure I never saw her, not being a century old, but I was told so and I needs must repeat it. She had none of the feverish petulance, alternated by fits of apathetic languor, which distinguishes the *zingarella*; neither had she the insinuating curiosity nor the frontless audacity of Hebrew mendicancy. She was calm as the water of the lagunes, and at the same time active as the light gondolas that skimmed along their surface.

As she was growing rapidly and as her mother was very poor, her clothes were always a year too short, which gave to her long legs of fourteen years' growth, accustomed to show themselves in public, a sort of savage grace which one was pleased and at the same time sorry to see. Whether her foot was large or not, it was impossible to say, her shoes were so bad. On the other hand, her figure, confined in narrow stays ripped at every seam, was elastic and flexible as a palm-tree, but without form, fulness, or attraction. She, poor girl! thought nothing about it, accustomed as she was to hear herself

called a gipsy and a wanderer by the fair daughters of the Adria. Her face was round, sallow, and insignificant, and would have struck nobody, if her short thick hair fastened behind her ears, and at the same time her serious and indifferent demeanor, had not given her a singularity of aspect which was but little attractive. Faces which do not please at first, by degrees lose still more the power of pleasing. The beings to whom they belong, indifferent to others, become so to themselves, and assume a negligence of aspect which repels more and more. On the contrary, beauty observes, admires, and decks itself as it were in an imaginary mirror which is always before its eyes. Ugliness forgets itself and is passed by. Nevertheless, there are two sorts of ugliness; one which suffers, and protests against the general disapprobation by habitual rage and envy—that is the true, the only ugliness. The other, ingenuous, heedless, which goes quietly on its way, neither inviting nor shunning comparisons, and which wins the heart while it shocks the sense—such was the ugliness of Consuelo. Those who were sufficiently generous to interest themselves about her, at first regretted that she was not pretty; and then correcting themselves, and patting her head with a familiarity which beauty does not permit, added: “After all, you are a good creature;” and Consuelo was perfectly satisfied, although she knew very well that that meant, “You are nothing more.”

In the mean time, the young and handsome signor who had offered her the holy water at the font, stayed behind till he had seen all the scholars disappear. He looked at them with attention, and when Clorinda, the handsomest, passed near him, he held out his moistened fingers that he might have the pleasure of touching hers. The young girl blushed with pride, and passed on, casting as she did so, one of those glances of shame mixed with boldness, which are expressive neither of self-respect nor modesty.

As soon as they had disappeared in the interior of the convent, the gallant patrician returned to the nave, and addressed the preceptor who was descending more slowly the steps of the tribune.

“*Corpo di Bacco!* dear maestro,” said he, “will you tell me which of your pupils sang the ‘*Salve Regina*?’”

“And why so anxious to know, Count Zustiniani?” asked the professor, accompanying him out of the church.

“To compliment you on your pupil,” replied the patrician. “You know how long I have attended vespers, and even the exercises; for you are aware how very fond I am of sacred music. Well, this is the first time that I have heard Pergolese sung in so perfect a manner, and as to the voice, it is the most beautiful that I have ever listened to.”

“I believe it well,” replied the professor, inhaling a large pinch of snuff with dignity and satisfaction.

“Tell me then the name of this heavenly creature who has thrown me into such an ecstasy. In spite of your severity and your continual fault-finding, you have created the best school in all Italy. Your choruses are excellent, and your solos very good; but your music is so severe, so grand, that young girls can hardly be expected to express its beauties.”

“They do not express them,” said the professor mournfully, “because they do not feel them. Good voices, God be thanked, we do not want; but as for a good musical organization, alas, it is hardly to be met with!”

"You possess at least one admirably endowed. Her organ is magnificent, her sentiment perfect, her skill remarkable—name her then."

"Is it not so?" said the professor, evading the question; "did it not delight you?"

"It took my heart by storm—it even drew tears from me—and that by means so simple, combinations so little sought after, that at first I could hardly understand it. Then I remembered what you had so often told me touching your divine art, my dear master, and for the first time I understood how much you were in the right."

"And what did I say to you?" said the maestro, with an air of triumph.

"You told me," replied the count, "that simplicity is the essence of the great, the true, the beautiful in art."

"I also told you that there was often much to observe and applaud in the clever, and brilliant, and well combined."

"Doubtless; but between these secondary qualities and the true manifestation of genius, there was an abyss, you said. Very well, dear maestro: your cantatrice is alone on one side while all the rest are on the other."

"It is not less true than well expressed," observed the professor, rubbing his hands.

"Her name?" replied the count.

"Whose name?" rejoined the malicious professor.

"Oh, *per Dio Santo!* that of the siren whom I have just been hearing."

"What do you want with her name, Signor Count?" replied Porpora, in a tone of severity.

"Why should you wish to make a secret of it, maestro?"

"I will tell you why, if you will let me know what object you have in finding out."

"Is it not a natural and irresistible feeling to wish to see and to know the objects of our admiration?"

"Ah! that is not your only motive. My dear Count, pardon that I thus contradict you. You are a skilful amateur and a profound connoisseur in music, as everybody knows; but you are, over and above all, proprietor of the theatre of San Samuel. It is your glory and your interest alike, to encourage the loftiest talent and the finest voices of Italy. You know that our instruction is good, and that with us alone those studies are pursued which form great musicians. You have already carried off Corilla from me, as she will one day be carried off from you by an engagement in some other theatre; so you are come to spy about, to see if you can't get a hold of some other Corilla—if, indeed, we have formed one. That is the truth, Signor Count, you must admit."

"And were it even so, dear maestro," replied the count, smiling, "what would it signify to you?—where is the harm?"

"It is a great deal of harm, Signor Count. Is it nothing to corrupt, to destroy these poor creatures?"

"Ha! my most austere professor, how long have you been the guardian angel of their frail virtues?"

"I know very well, Signor Count, I have nothing to do with them, except as regards their talent, which you disfigure, and disgrace in your theatres by giving them inferior music to sing. Is it not a sorrow—is it not a sin—to see Corilla, who was just beginning to understand

our serious art, descend from the sacred to the profane—from prayer to badinage—from the altar to the boards—from the sublime to the absurd—from Allegri and Palestrina to Almonini and the barber Apollini?”

“So you refuse, in your severity, to name a girl respecting whom I can have no intention, seeing that I do not know whether she has other necessary qualifications for the theatre?”

“I absolutely refuse.”

“And do you suppose I shall not find it out?”

“Alas! you will do so if you are bent upon it, but I shall do my utmost to prevent you from taking her from us.”

“Very well, maestro, you are half conquered, for I have seen her—I have divined your mysterious divinity.”

“So, so,” replied the master, with a reserved and distrustful air “are you sure of that?”

“My eyes and my heart have alike revealed her to me; and, that you may be convinced, I shall describe her to you. She is tall—taller, I think, than any of your pupils—fair as the snow on Friuli, and rosy as the dawn of a summer morn; she has golden hair, azure eyes, an exquisitely rounded form, with a ruby on her finger which burned my hand as I touched it, like sparks from a magic fire.”

“Bravo!” exclaimed Porpora, with a cunning air; “in that case I have nothing to conceal. The name of your beauty is Clorinda. Go and pay your court to her; gain her over with gold, with diamonds, and gay attire. You will easily conclude an engagement with her. She will help you to replace Corilla; for the public of your theatre always prefer fine shoulders to sweet sounds, flashing eyes to a lofty intellect.”

“Am I then mistaken, my dear maestro?” said the count, a little confused; “and is Clorinda but a common-place beauty?”

“But suppose my siren, my divinity, my angel, as you are pleased to call her,” resumed the maestro, maliciously, “was anything but a beauty?”

“If she be deformed, I beseech you not to name her, for my illusion would be too cruelly dissipated. If she were only ugly, I could still adore her: but I should not engage her for the theatre, because talent without beauty is a misfortune, a struggle, a perpetual torment for a woman. What are you looking at, maestro, and why do you pause?”

“Why? because we are at the water-steps, and I see no gondola. But you, Count, what do you look at?”

“I was looking to see if that young fellow on the steps there beside that plain little girl, was not my protégé, Anzoleto, the handsomest and most intelligent of all our little plebeians. Look at him, dear maestro. Do you not, like me, feel interested in him? That boy has the sweetest tenor in Venice, and he is passionately fond of music, for which he has an incredible aptitude. I have long wished to talk to you about it, and to ask you to give him lessons. I look upon him as the future support of my theatre, and hope in a few years to be repaid for all my trouble. Hola, Zoto! come hither, my lad, that I may present you to the illustrious master Porpora.”

Anzoleto drew his naked legs out of the water, where they hung carelessly, while he amused himself stringing those pretty shells which in Venice are poetically termed *flori di mare*. His only garments were a pair of well-worn pantaloons and a fine shirt, through the rents of which one could see his white shoulders, modelled like those of a

youthful Bacchus. He had all the grace and beauty of a young Faun, chiselled in the palmiest days of Grecian art; and his features displayed that singular union, not unfrequent in the creation of Grecian statuary, of careless irony with meditative sadness. His fine fair hair, somewhat bronzed by the sun, clustered in Antinous-like curls about his alabaster neck; his features were regular and beautifully formed; but there was something bold and forward in the expression of his jet-black eyes which displeased the maestro. The boy promptly rose when he heard the voice of Zustiniani, pitched his shells into the lap of the little girl beside him, who without raising her eyes went on with her occupation of stringing them along with golden beads, and coming forward, kissed the count's hand, after the fashion of the country.

"Upon my word, a handsome fellow!" said the professor, tapping him gently on the cheek; "but he seems occupied with amusements rather childish for his time of life; he is fully eighteen years old, is he not?"

"Nineteen shortly, *Sior Professor*," replied Anzoletto, in the Venetian dialect; "but if I amuse myself with shells, it is to help little Consuelo here to make her necklaces."

"Consuelo," said the master, advancing towards his pupil with the count and Anzoletto, "I did not imagine that you cared for ornaments."

"Oh, it is not for myself, Signor," replied Consuelo, rising cautiously to prevent the shells falling from her lap; "I make them for sale, in order to procure rice and Indian corn."

"She is poor, and supports her mother," said Porpora. "Listen, Consuelo: should you find yourselves in any difficulty, be sure to come and see me; but I absolutely forbid you to beg, remember."

"Oh, you need not forbid her, *Sior Professor*," replied Anzoletto, with animation; "she will never do so; and, besides, I would prevent her."

"But you have nothing," said the count.

"Nothing but your liberality, Eccellenza; but we share together, the little one and myself."

"She is a relative then!"

"No; she is a stranger—it is Consuelo."

"Consuelo! what a singular name!" said the count.

"A beautiful name, Eccellenza," resumed Anzoletto; "it means Consolation."

"Oh, indeed? She is your friend then, it seems?"

"She is my betrothed, Signor."

"So soon? Such children! to think of marriage already!"

"We shall marry on the day that you may sign my engagement at San Samuel, Eccellenza."

"In that case you will have to wait a long time, my little ones."

"Oh, we shall wait," replied Consuelo, with the cheerful gaiety of innocence.

The count and the maestro amused themselves for some time longer with the frank remarks and repartees of the young couple; then, having arranged that Anzoletto should give the professor an opportunity of hearing his voice in the morning, they separated, leaving him to his serious occupations.

"What do you think of that little girl?" said the professor to Zustiniani.

"I saw her but an instant, and I think her sufficiently ugly to justify the maxim, that in the eyes of a youth of eighteen every woman is handsome."

"Very good," rejoined the professor; "now permit me to inform you that your divine songstress, your siren, your mysterious beauty, was no other than Consuelo."

"What! that dirty creature?—that dark and meagre grasshopper? Impossible, maestro."

"No other, Signor Count. "Would she not make a fascinating *prima donna*?"

The count stopped, looked back, and clasping his hands while he surveyed Consuelo at a distance, exclaimed in mock despair, "Just Heaven! how canst thou so err as to pour the fire of genius into heads so poorly formed!"

"So you give up your culpable intentions?" said the professor.

"Most certainly."

"You promise me?" added Porpora.

"Oh, I swear it," replied the count.

CHAPTER III.

BORN in sunny Italy, brought up by chance, like a seabird sporting on its shores, poor, an orphan, a castaway, and nevertheless happy in the present and confiding in the future, foundling as he doubtless was—Anzoletto, the handsome youth of nineteen, who spent his days with little Consuelo, in perfect freedom on the footways of Venice, was not, as might be supposed, in his first love. Too early initiated, he would perhaps have been completely corrupted and worn out, had he dwelt in our gloomy climate, or had Nature endowed him with a feebler organization. But early developed and destined to a long and powerful career, his heart was pure, and his senses were restrained by his will. He had met the little Spaniard by chance, singing hymns before the Madonnette; and for the pleasure of exercising his voice he had joined her for hours together beneath the stars. Then they met upon the sands of the Lido to gather shell-fish, which he ate, and which she converted into chaplets and other ornaments. And then again they had met in the churches, where she prayed with all her heart, and where he gazed with all his eyes at the fine ladies. In all these interviews Consuelo had appeared to him so good, so sweet, so obliging, and so gay, that she had become his inseparable friend and companion—he knew not very well how or why. Anzoletto had known love's rapture only. He was attached for Consuelo; and as he belonged to a country and a people where passion reigns over every other feeling, he knew no other name for this attachment than that of love. Consuelo admitted this mode of speaking after she had addressed Anzoletto as follows:—"If you are my lover, it is then with the intention of marrying me?" To which he replied—"Certainly, if you wish it, we shall marry each other." From that moment it was a settled affair. Possibly Anzoletto was amusing himself, but to Consuelo it was a matter of firm conviction. Even already his young heart experienced those contradictory and complicated emotions which agitate and discompose the existence of those who love too early.

Given up to violent impulses, greedy of pleasure, loving only what

promoted his happiness, hating and avoiding everything which opposed his gratifications, at heart an artist—that is to say, feeling and revelling in life with frightful intensity—he soon found that his transient attachments imposed on him the sufferings and dangers of a passion which he did not really feel; and he experienced the want of sweet companionship, and of a chaste and tranquil outlet to his feelings. Then, without understanding the charm which drew him to Consuelo—having little experience of the beautiful—hardly knowing whether she was handsome or ugly—joining for her sake in amusements beneath his age—he led with her in public, on the marble floors, and on the waters of Venice, a life as happy, as pure, as retired, and almost as poetic, as that of Paul and Virginia in the recesses of the forest. Although they enjoyed unrestrained liberty—no watchful, tender parents to form them to virtue—no devoted attendant to seek them and bring them back to the bosom of their homes—not even a dog to warn them of danger—they never experienced harm. They skimmed over the waters of the lagunes in all times and seasons in their open boat, without oars or pilot; they wandered over the marshes without guide, without watch, and heedless of the rising waters; they sang before the vine-covered chapels at the corners of the streets, without thinking of the hour, and sometimes with no other couch than the white tiles, still warm with the summer rays. They paused before the theatre of Punchinello, and followed with riveted attention the fantastic drama of the beautiful Corisanda, queen of the puppet show, without thinking of their breakfast, or the little probability there was of supper. They enjoyed the excesses of the carnival, he with his coat turned inside out, she with a bunch of old ribbons placed coquettishly over her ear. They dined sumptuously—sometimes on the balustrades of a bridge or on the steps of a palace—on shell-fish, fennel stalks, and pieces of citron. In short, they led a free and joyous life, without incurring more risk, or feeling more emotion, than might have been experienced by two young people of the same age and sex. Days, years passed away. Anzoletto formed other connections, while Consuelo never imagined that he could love any one but her. She became a young woman without feeling it necessary to exercise any further reserve with her betrothed; while he saw her undergo this transformation without feeling any impatience, or desiring to change this intimacy, free as it was at once from scruple, mystery, or remorse.

It was already four years since Professor Porpora and Zustiniani had mutually introduced their little musicians, and during this period the count had never once thought of the young chorister. The professor had likewise forgotten the handsome Anzoletto, inasmuch as he had found him endowed with none of the qualities desirable in a pupil—to wit, a serious, patient disposition, submission to his teacher, and complete absence of all musical studies before the period of his instruction. “Do not talk to me,” said he, “about a pupil whose mind is anything else than a *tabula rasa*, or virgin wax, on which I am to make the first impression. I cannot afford to give up a year to unteach what has been learned before. If you want me to write, give me a clear surface, and that too of a good quality. If it be too hard I can make no impression on it; if too soft, I shall destroy it at the first stroke.” In short, although he acknowledged the extraordinary talents of the young Anzoletto, he told the count with some temper and ironical humility, at the end of his first lesson, that h

was not adapted to a pupil so far advanced, and that a master could only embarrass and retard the natural progress and invincible development of so superior an organization.

The count sent his protégé to Professor Melliflore, who, with roulades and cadences, modulations and trills, so developed his brilliant qualities, that at twenty-three he was considered capable, in the opinion of all those who heard him in the saloons of the court, of coming out at San Samuel in the first parts. One evening the dilettanti, nobility, and artists of repute then in Venice, were requested to be present at a final and decisive trial. For the first time in his life Anzoleto doffed his plebeian attire, put on a black coat, a satin vest, and with curled and powdered hair, and buckles in his shoes, glided over with a composed air to the harpsichord, where amid the glare of a hundred wax-lights, and under the gaze of two or three hundred persons, he boldly distended his chest, and made the utmost display of powers that were to introduce him into a career where not one judge alone, but a whole public, held the palm in one hand and downfall in the other.

We need not ask whether Anzoleto was secretly agitated. Nevertheless, he scarcely allowed his emotion to be apparent; and hardly had his piercing eyes divined by a stealthy glance the secret approbation which women rarely refuse to grant to so handsome a youth—hardly had the amateurs, surprised at the compass of his voice, and his facility of expression, uttered a few faint murmurs of applause—when joy and hope flooded his whole being. For the first time Anzoleto, hitherto ill-instructed and undervalued, felt that he was no common man; and transported by the necessity and the consciousness of success, he sang with an originality, an energy, and skill, that were altogether remarkable. His taste, to be sure, was not always pure, nor his execution faultless; but he was always able to extricate himself by his boldness, his intelligence, and enthusiasm. He failed in effects which the composer had intended, but he realized others which no one ever thought of—neither the author who composed, the professor who interpreted, nor the virtuoso who rehearsed them. His originality took the world by storm. For one innovation his awkwardness was pardoned, and for an original sentiment they excused ten rebellions against method. So true it is that in point of art the least spark of genius—the smallest flight in the direction of new conquests—exercises a greater fascination than all the resources and lights of science within known limits.

Nobody, perhaps, was able to explain these matters, and nobody escaped the common enthusiasm. Corilla began by a grand aria, well sung and loudly applauded; yet the success of the young débutant was so much greater than her own, that she could not help feeling an emotion of anger. But when Anzoleto, loaded with caresses and praises, returned to the harpsichord where she was seated, he said, with a mixture of humility and boldness, "And you, queen of song and queen of beauty! have you not one encouraging glance for the poor wretch who fears even while he adores you?" The prima donna surprised at so much assurance, looked more closely at the handsome countenance which till then she had hardly deigned to notice—for what vain and triumphant woman cares to cast a glance on the child of obscurity and poverty? She looked, and was struck with his beauty. The fire of his glances penetrated her soul; and vanquished, fascinated in her turn, she directed towards him a long

and earnest gaze, which served to seal his celebrity. In this memorable meeting, Anzoletto had led the public, and disarmed his most redoubtable adversary; for the beautiful songstress was not only queen of the stage, but at the head of the management, and of the cabaret of Count Zustiniani.

CHAPTER IV.

IN the midst of the general and somewhat exaggerated applause which the voice and manner of the debutant had drawn forth, a single auditor, seated on the extreme edge of his chair, his legs close together and his hands motionless on his knees, after the fashion of the Egyptian gods, remained dumb as a sphinx, and mysterious as a hieroglyphic. It was the able professor and celebrated composer Porpora. Whilst his gallant colleague, Professor Melliflore, ascribing to himself all the glory of Anzoletto's success, plumed himself before the women and bowed to the men, as if to thank them even for their looks, the master of sacred song, with eyes bent on the ground, silent and severe, seemed lost in thought. When the company, who were engaged to a ball at the palace of the Doge, had slowly departed, and the most enthusiastic dilettanti, with some ladies, alone remained, Zustiniani drew nigh to the austere master.

"You are too hard upon us, poor moderns, my dear professor," said he; "but your silence has no influence on me. You would exclude this new and charming style which delights us all. But your heart is open in spite of you, and your ears have drunk in the seductive poison."

"Come *Sior Profesor*," said the charming Corilla, resuming with her old master the childish manners of the *scuola*, "you must grant me a favor."

"Away, unhappy girl!" said the master, partly smiling and partly displeased at the caresses of his inconstant pupil: "there is no further communication between us. I know you no more. Take your sweet smiles and perfidious warblings elsewhere."

"There now, he is coming round," said Corilla, taking with one hand the arm of the debutant, without letting go her hold of the white and ample cravat of the professor. "Come hitherto, Zoto, and bow the knee before the most learned maestro in all Italy. Submit thyself, my child, and disarm his rigor. One word from him, if thou couldst obtain it, would be more to thee than all the trumpets of renown."

"You have been severe towards me, Signor Professor," said Anzoletto, bending before him with mock humility; "nevertheless, my only wish for four years has been to induce you to reconsider a cruel judgment; and if I fail in doing so to-night, I fear I shall never have the courage to appear before the public, loaded with your anathema."

"Child!" said the professor, rising hastily, and speaking with an earnestness which imparted something noble to his unimpressive figure, "leave false and honied words to women. Never descend to the language of flattery, even to your superiors—much less to those whose suffrage you disdain. It is but an hour ago since, poor, unknown,

timid, in this little corner, all your prospects hung upon a hair—on a note from your throat—a moment's failure of your resources, or a mere whim of your audience. Chance, and the efforts of an instant, have made you rich, celebrated, insolent. Your career is open before you, and you have only to go on, so long as your strength sustains you. Listen then: for the first, and perhaps for the last time, you are about to hear the truth. You are in a false direction; you sing badly, and love bad music. You know nothing, and have studied nothing thoroughly. All you have is the facility which practice imparts. You assume a passion which you do not feel: you warble and shake like those pretty coquettish young damsels whom one pardons for simpering where they know not how to sing. You know not how to phrase your music; you pronounce badly; you have a vulgar accent, a false and common style. Do not be discouraged, however, with all these defects. You have wherewithal to combat them. You have qualities which neither labor nor instruction can impart. You have that which neither bad advice nor bad example can take away. You have the sacred fire—you have genius! Alas! it is a fire which will shine upon nothing grand, a genius that will remain for ever barren; for I have seen it in your eyes, ay I have felt it in your breast. You have not the worship of art; you have not faith in the great masters, nor respect for their grand conceptions; you love glory, and glory for yourself alone. You might—you could—but, no! it is too late! Your destiny will be as the flash of a meteor—like that of—”

And the professor, thrusting his hat over his brows, turned his back, and without bowing to any one, left the apartment, absorbed in mentally completing his energetic sentence.

Every one tried to laugh at the sententious professor; but his words left a painful impression, and a melancholy feeling of doubt, which lasted for some moments. Anzoleto was the first who apparently ceased to think of them, though they had occasioned him an intense feeling of joy, pride, anger, and emulation, which was destined to influence all his latter life. He appeared exclusively engaged in pleasing Corilla, and he knew so well how to flatter her, that she was very much taken with him at this first meeting. Count Zustiniani was not jealous, and perhaps had his reasons for taking no notice of them. He was interested in the fame and success of his theatre more than anything else in the world; not that he cared about money, but because he was a real fanatic in all that related to what are termed the *fine arts*. This, in my opinion, is a phrase which is generally employed in a vulgar sense, and being altogether Italian, is consequently enthusiastic and without much discernment. The *culture of art*, a modern expression, which the world did not make use of a hundred years ago, has a meaning altogether different from a *taste for the fine arts*. The count was a man of taste in the common acceptation of the word—amateur, and nothing more; but the gratification of his taste was the great business of his life. He loved to be busy about the public, and to have the public busy about him—to frequent the society of artists—to lead the fashion—to have his theatre, his luxury, his amiability, and his magnificence, made the subject of conversation. He had, in short, the ruling passion of the great noblemen of his country—namely, ostentation. To possess and direct a theatre was the best means of occupying and amusing the whole city. He would have been happy if he could have asked the whole republic to dinner. When strangers asked Professor Porpora who was the Count Zustin-

ani, he was accustomed to reply—"He is one who loves to give entertainments, and who serves up music at his theatre as he would pheasants on his table."

It was one in the morning before the company separated. "Anzoletto," said Corilla, when alone with him in the embrasure of the balcony, "where do you live?" At this unexpected inquiry, Anzoletto grew pale and red almost at the same moment; for how could he confess to the rich and fascinating beauty before him, that he had in a manner neither house nor home? Even this response would have been easier than to mention the miserable den where he was in the habit of taking refuge, when neither inclination nor necessity obliged him to pass the night in the open air.

"Well, what is there so extraordinary in my question?" said Corilla, laughing.

"I am asking myself," replied Anzoletto, with much presence of mind, "what royal or fairy palace were fitting home for the happy mortal who is honored by a glance from Corilla."

"What does all this flattery mean?" said she, darting on him one of the most bewitching glances contained in the storehouse of her charms.

"That I have not that honor," replied the young man; "but that, if I had, I should be content only to float between earth and sky, like the stars."

"Or like the *cuccali*," said the songstress, bursting into a fit of laughter. It is well known that gulls (*cuccali*) are proverbially simple, and to speak of their awkwardness, in the language of Venice, is equivalent to saying, in ours, "As stupid as a goose."

"Ridicule me—despise me," replied Anzoletto; "I would rather that you should do so than not think of me at all."

"Well, then," said she, "since you must reply in metaphors, I shall take you with me in my gondola; and if I take you away from your abode, instead of taking you to it, it will be your own fault."

"If that be your motive for inquiry, my answer is brief and explicit: my home is on the steps of your palace."

"Go then, and await me on the stairs below," said Corilla, lowering her voice; "for Zustiniani may blame the indulgence with which I have listened to your nonsense."

In the first impulse of his vanity Anzoletto disappeared, and darting towards the landing-place of the palace, to the prow of Corilla's gondola, counted the moments by the beating of his fevered pulse. But before she appeared on the steps of the palace, many thoughts had passed through the anxious and ambitious brain of the debutant "Corilla," said he to himself, "is all powerful; but if by pleasing her I were to displease the count, or if, in virtue of my too easy triumph, I were to destroy her power, and disgust him altogether with so inconstant a beauty——"

In the midst of these perplexing thoughts, Anzoletto measured with a glance the stair which he might yet remount, and was planning how to effect his escape, when torches gleamed under the portico, and the beautiful Corilla, wrapped in an ermine cloak, appeared upon the upper steps, amid a group of cavaliers, anxious to support her rounded elbow in the hollow of their hand, and in this manner to assist her to descend, as is the custom in Venice.

"Well," said the gondolier of the prima donna to the confounded Anzoletto, "what are you doing there? Make haste into the gondola

if you have permission; if not, proceed on your way, for my lord count is with the signora.'

Anzoletto threw himself into the bottom of the gondola, without knowing what he did. He was stupefied. But scarcely did he find himself there, when he fancied the amazement and indignation which the count would feel, should he enter into the gondola with Corilla, and find there his insolent protégé. His cruel anxiety was protracted for several minutes. The signora had stopped about half-way down the staircase; she was laughing and talking with those about her, and, in discussing a musical phrase, she repeated it in several different ways. Her clear and thrilling voice died away amid the palaces and cupolas of the canal, as the crow of the cock before the dawn, is lost in the silence of the open country.

Anzoletto, unable to contain himself, resolved to escape by the opening of the gondola which was farthest from the stair. He had already thrust aside the glass in its panel of black velvet, and had passed one leg through the opening, when the second rower of the prima donna, who was stationed at the stern, leaning over the edge of the little cabin, said in a low voice, "They are singing—that is as much as to say, 'You may wait without being afraid.'"

"I did not know the usual custom," thought Anzoletto, who still tarried, not without some mixture of consternation. Corilla amused herself by bringing the count as far as the side of the gondola, and kept him standing there, while she repeated the "*felicissima notte*," until she had left the shore. She then came and placed herself beside her new admirer, with as much ease and self-possession as if his life and her own fortune had not been at stake.

"Look at Corilla," said Zustiniani to the Count Barberigo. "Well, I would wager my head that she is not alone in yonder gondola."

"And why do you think so?" replied Barberigo.

"Because she asked me a thousand times to accompany her to her palace."

"Is that your jealousy?"

"Oh, I have been long free from that weakness. I should be right glad if our prima donna would take a fancy to some one who would prevent her from leaving Venice as she sometimes threatens. I could console myself for her desertion of me, but I could neither replace her voice nor her talents, nor the ardor with which she inspires the public at San Samuel."

"I understand; but who, then, is the happy favorite of this mad princess?"

The count and his friend enumerated all whom Corilla appeared to encourage during the evening. Anzoletto was absolutely the only one whom they failed to think of.

CHAPTER V.

A VIOLENT struggle arose in the breast of the happy lover, who agitated and palpitating, was borne on the waters through the tranquil night, with the most celebrated beauty of Venice. Anzoletto was transported by his ardor, which gratified vanity rendered still more

powerful. On the other hand, the fear of displeasing, of being scornfully dismissed and impeached, restrained his impetuosity. Prudent and cunning, like a true Venetian as he was, he had not aspired to the theatre for more than six years, without being well informed as to the fantastic and imperious woman who governed all its intrigues. He was well assured that his reign would be of short duration, and if he did not withdraw from this dangerous honor, it was because he was taken in a measure by surprise. He had merely wished to gain tolerance by his courtesy; and, behold! his youth, his beauty, and budding glory, had inspired love! "Now," said Anzoleto, with the rapid perception which heads of his wonderful organization enjoy, "there is nothing but to make myself feared, if to-morrow I would not be ridiculous. But how shall a poor devil like myself accomplish this with a haughty beauty like Corilla?" He was soon decided. He began a system of distrust, jealousy, and bitterness, of which the passionate coquetry astonished the prima donna. Their conversation may be resumed as follows:—

Anzoleto—"I know that you do not love me—that you will never love me; therefore am I sad and constrained beside you."

Corilla—"And suppose I were to love you?"

Anzoleto—"I should be wretched, because that were to fall from heaven into the abyss, and lose you perchance an hour after I had gained you, at the price of all my future happiness."

Corilla—"And what makes you think me so inconstant?"

Anzoleto—"First, the want of desert on my part; second, the ill that is said of you."

Corilla—"And who dares to asperse me?"

Anzoleto—"Everybody, because everybody adores you."

Corilla—"Then, if I were mad enough to like you, and to tell you so, would you repel me?"

Anzoleto—"I know not if I should have the power to fly; but if I had, I know that I should never behold you again."

"Very well," said Corilla, "I have a fancy to try the experiment—Anzoleto, I love you."

"I do not believe it," replied he. "If I stay, it is because I think you are only mocking me. That is a game at which you shall not frighten me, and still less shall you pique me."

"You wish to try an encounter of wit, I think."

"No, indeed; I am not in the least to be dreaded, since I give you the means of overcoming me; it is to freeze me with terror, and drive me from your presence, in telling me seriously what you have just now uttered in jest."

"You are a knowing fellow, and I see that one must be careful what one says to you. You are one of those who not only wish to breathe the fragrance of the rose, but would pluck and preserve it. I could not have supposed you so bold and so decided at your age."

"And do you despise me therefore?"

"On the contrary, I am the more pleased with you. Good night, Anzoleto; we shall see each other again."

She held out her white hand, which he kissed passionately. "I have got off famously," said he, as he escaped by the passages leading from the canaletto.

Despairing of gaining access to his nest at so late an hour, he thought he would lie down at the first porch, to gain the heavenly repose which infancy and poverty alone know; but, for the first time in

his life, he could not find a slab sufficiently smooth for his purpose. The pavement of Venice is the cleanest and whitest in the world; still, the light dust scattered over it hardly suited a dark dress of elegant material and latest fashion. And then the propriety of the thing! The boatmen who would have carefully stepped over the young plebeian in the morning, would have insulted him, and perhaps soiled his parasitic livery during his repose. What would they have thought of one reposing in the open air in silk stockings, fine linen, and lace ruffles? Anzoleto regretted his good woollen *capa*, worn and old no doubt, but thick and well calculated to resist the unhealthy morning fogs of Venice. It was now towards the latter end of February; and, although the days at this period were warm and brilliant, the nights at Venice were still very cold. Then he thought he would gain admission into one of the gondolas fastened to the bank, but they were all secured under lock and key. At last he found one of which the door yielded; but in getting in, he stumbled over the legs of the barcarole, who had retired for the night. "*Per diavolo!*" said a rough voice from the bottom of the cabin, "who are you, and what do you want?"

"Is it you, Zanetto?" replied Anzoleto, recognizing the man, who was generally very civil to him; "let me stretch myself beside you, and dream a while within your cabin."

"And who are you?" said Zanetto.

"Anzoleto: do you not know me?"

"*Per diavolo*, no! You have garments which Anzoleto never wore, unless he stole them. Be off! Were you the Doge in person, I would not open my bark to a man who strutted about in fine clothes when he had not a corner to rest in."

"So, so," thought Anzoleto; "the protection and favor of Count Zustiniani have exposed me to greater dangers and annoyances than they have procured me advantages. It is time that my fortune should correspond with my success, and I long to have a few sequins to enable me to support the station which I have assumed."

Sufficiently out of sorts, he sauntered through the deserted streets, not daring to pause a moment, lest the perspiration should be checked which anger and fatigue had caused to flow freely forth. "It is well, I do not grow hoarse," said he to himself; "to-morrow the count will show me off to some foolish Aristarchus, who, if I have the least feather in the throat in consequence of this night's want of rest, will say that I have no voice; and the Signor Count, who knows better, will repeat, 'If you had but heard him last night!' 'He is not equal, then,' the other will observe; 'or perhaps he is not in good health;'

or perhaps,' as a third will aver, 'he was tired last night. The truth is, he is very young to sing several days in succession. Had you not better wait till he is riper and more robust?' And the count will say, '*Diavolo!* if he grows hoarse after a couple of songs, he will not answer me.' Then, to make sure that I am strong and well, they will make me exercise every day till I am out of breath, and break my voice to prove that I have lungs. To the devil with their protection, I say! Ah! if I were only free of these great folk, and in favor with the public, and courted by the theatres, I could sing in their saloons, and treat with them as equal powers."

Thus plotting, Anzoleto reached one of those little spots termed *corti* in Venice. Courts indeed they were not, but an assemblage of houses opening on a common space, corresponding with what in Paris

is called *cite*. But there is nothing in the disposition of these pretended courts like the elegant and systematic arrangements of our modern squares. They are obscure spots, sometimes impassable, at other times allowing passage; but little frequented, and dwelt in by persons of slender fortune — laborers, workmen, or washerwomen who stretch their linen across the road, somewhat to the annoyance of the passengers, who put up with it in return for permission to go across. Woe to the poor artist who is obliged to open the windows of his apartment in these secluded recesses, where rustic life, with its noisy, unclean habits, re-appears in the heart of Venice, not two steps from large canals and sumptuous edifices! Woe to him if silence be necessary to his occupation! for, from morn till night, there is an interminable uproar, with children, fowls, and dogs, screaming and playing within the narrow space, the chatter of women in the porches, and the songs of workmen, which do not leave him a moment of repose. Happy, too, if *improvisatori* do not bawl their sonnets till they have gathered a coin from every window; or Brighella do not fix her station in the court, ready to begin her dialogue afresh with the "*avvocato, il tedesco, e il diavolo*," until she has exhausted in vain her eloquence before the dirty children—happy spectators, who do not scruple to listen and to look on, although they have not a farthing in their possession.

But at night, when all is silent, and when the quiet moon lights up the scene, this assemblage of houses of every period, united to each other without symmetry or pretension, divided by deep shadows full of mystery in their recesses, and of a wild spontaneous beauty, presents an infinitely picturesque assemblage. Everything is beautiful under the light of the moon. The least architectural effect assumes force and character, and the meanest balcony, with its clustering vine, reminds you of Spain and of romantic adventures with the cloak and sword. The clear atmosphere in which the distant cupolas rising above the dark mass are bathed, sheds on the minutest details of the picture a vague yet harmonious coloring, which invites one to reveries without end.

It was in the Corte Minelli, near the church of San Fantin, that Anzoleto found himself when the clocks of the different churches tolled the hour of two. A secret instinct had led his devious steps to the dwelling of one of whom he had not thought since the setting of the sun. Hardly had he entered the court, when he heard a sweet voice call him by the last syllables of his name; and raising his head he saw for an instant a faint profile shadow itself on one of the most miserable abodes of the place. A moment afterwards a door opened, and Consuelo, in a muslin petticoat and wrapped in an old black silk mantle which had served as adornment for her mother, extended one hand to him, while at the same time she placed her finger on her lip to enforce silence. They crept up the ruined stair, and seated at length on the terrace, they began one of those long whispering conversations, interrupted by kisses, which one hears by night along the level roofs, like the converse of wandering spirits wafted through the mist, amidst the strange chimneys, hooded with red turbans, of all the houses of Venice.

"How, my poor friend," said Anzoleto; "have you waited for me until now?"

"Did you not say you would give me an account of the evening, and tell me if you sang well—if you afforded pleasure—if they applauded you—if they signed your engagement?"

"And you, my best Consuelo," said Anzoletto, struck with remorse on seeing the confidence and sweetness of this poor girl, "tell me if my long absence has made you impatient—if you are not tired—if you do not feel chill on this cold terrace—if you have already supped—if you are not angry with me for coming so late—if you are uneasy—if you found fault with me."

"No such thing," she replied, throwing her arms about his neck. "If I have been impatient, it was not with you; if I felt wearied—if I was cold—I am no longer so, since you are here. Whether I have supped or not, I do not know; whether I have found fault with you?—why should I find fault with you?—if I have been disquieted?—why should I have been so?—if I have been angry with you?—never!"

"You are an angel!" said Anzoletto, returning her caress. "Ah, my only consolation! how cold and perfidious are all other hearts!"

"Alas! what has happened!—what have they done to the son of my soul?" exclaimed Consuelo, mixing with the sweet Venetian dialect the passionate expressions of her native tongue.

Anzoletto told her all that had happened—even to his gallantries with Corilla, and more especially the encouragement which she held out to him; only he smoothed matters over somewhat, saying nothing that could vex Consuelo, since in point of fact he had been faithful—and he told *almost* all. But there is always some minute particle of truth on which judicial inquiry has never thrown light—which no client has revealed to his advocate—which no sentence has ever aimed at except by chance—because in these few secret facts or intentions is the entire cause, the motive, the aim—the object in a word—of these great suits, always so badly pleaded and always so badly judged, whatever may be the ardor of the speakers or the coolness of the magistrate.

To return to Anzoletto. It is not necessary to say what peccadilloes he omitted, what emotions in public he translated in his own fashion, what secret palpitations in the gondola he forgot to mention. I do not think he even spoke of the gondola at all, and as to his flatteries at the cantatrice, why they were adroit mystifications by means of which he escaped her perilous advances without making her angry. Wherefore, being unwilling, and I may add unable, to mention all the temptations which he had surmounted by his prudence and caution, why, dear lady reader, should the young rogue awaken jealousy in the bosom of Consuelo? Happily for the little Spaniard she knew nothing of jealousy. This dark and bitter feeling only afflicts souls that have greatly suffered, and hitherto Consuelo had been happy in her affection as she was good. The only thing that made a profound impression upon her was the severe yet flattering denunciation of Professor Porpora on the adored head of Anzoletto. She made him repeat all the expressions which the maestro had used, and when he had done so, pondered on them long and earnestly.

"My little Consuelo," said Anzoletto without remarking her abstraction, "it is horribly cold here. Are you not afraid of getting cold? Think, my dear, that our prospects depend much more upon your voice than mine."

"I never get cold," said she; "but you are so lightly dressed with your fine clothes. Here now, put on this mantle."

"What would you have me do with this fine bit of torn taffeta? I would rather take shelter for half an hour in your apartment."

"'Tis well," said Consuelo, "but then we must not speak; the neighbors would hear us, and we should be to blame. They are not ill-disposed; they see us together without tormenting me about it, because they know very well you do not come here at night. You would do better to sleep at home."

"Impossible! They will only open at daylight, and there are still three hours to watch. See, my teeth chatter with the cold!"

"Well," said Consuelo, getting up, "I shall let you into my room and return to the terrace, so that if anybody should observe it, it will be seen there is nothing wrong."

She brought him into a dilapidated apartment, where, under flowers and frescoes on the wall, appeared a second picture, almost in a worse condition than the first. A large square bed with a mattress of sea-weed, and a spotted muslin coverlet, perfectly clean but patched with fragments of every imaginable color; a straw chair, a little table, an antique guitar, a flagree cross—the only wealth her mother had left—a spinet, a great heap of worm-eaten music, which Professor Porpora was kind enough to lend—such was the furniture of the young artist, daughter of a poor Bohemian, the pupil of a celebrated master, and sweetheart of a handsome adventurer. As there was but one chair, and as the table was covered with music, there was no seat for Anzoleto but the bed, on which he placed himself without hesitation. Hardly was he seated, when overwhelmed with fatigue, his head fell upon the woolen cushion which served as a pillow; but almost immediately starting up again by a violent effort, he exclaimed—

"And you, my poor girl! are you going to take no rest? Ah! I am a wretch—I shall go and lie in the streets."

"No," said Consuelo, gently thrusting him back; "you are ill and I am not. My mother died a good Catholic; she is now in heaven, and sees us at this very hour. She knows you have kept the promise you made to her, never to abandon me. She knows that our affection has been pure since her death as before. She sees at this moment that I neither do nor think what is wrong—that her soul may repose in the Lord!" And here Consuelo made the sign of the cross. Anzoleto already slumbered. "I am going to tell my beads," continued Consuelo, moving away, "that you may not take the fever."

"Angel that you are!" faintly murmured Anzoleto, and he did not even perceive that he was alone. She had gone, in fact, to the terrace. In a short time she returned to assure herself that he was not ill, and, finding that he slept tranquilly, she gazed long and earnestly at his beautiful face, as it lay lighted by the moon.

Then, determined to resist drowsiness herself, and finding that the emotions of the evening had caused her to neglect her work, she lighted the lamp, and seated before the little table, she noted a composition which Master Porpora had required of her for the following day.

CHAPTER VI.

THE Count Zustiniani, notwithstanding his philosophical composure was not so indifferent to the insolent caprices of Corilla as he pretended. Good-natured, weak, frivolous, Zustiniani was only a rake in

appearance and by his social position. He could not help feeling at the bottom of his heart the ungrateful return which this insolent and foolish girl had made to his generosity; and though at that period it was considered the worst possible taste, as well at Venice as at Paris, to seem jealous, his Italian pride revolted at the absurd and miserable position in which Corilla had placed him. So, the same afternoon that had seen Anzoletto shine at the Palazzo Zustiniani, the count, after having laughed with Barberigo over the tricks of Corilla, his saloons being emptied and the wax-lights extinguished, took down his cloak and sword, and, in order to ease his mind, set off for the palazzo inhabited by his mistress.

He found that she was alone, but still doubted her. He began to converse in a low voice with the barcarole who was mooring the gondola of the prima donna under the arch reserved for that purpose; and, by virtue of a few sequins, he easily convinced himself that he was not mistaken, and that Corilla had not been alone in the gondola; but who it was that had accompanied her he could not ascertain—the gondolier knew not. He had met Anzoletto a hundred times in the passages of the theatre, or near the Palazzo Zustiniani, but failed to recognise him when powdered and in his dark attire.

This inscrutable mystery completed the count's annoyance. He consoled himself with ridiculing his rival, the only vengeance which good breeding permitted, and not less cruel in a gay and frivolous age than murder at more serious periods. He could not sleep; and at the hour when Porpora began his instructions, he set out for the *Scuola di Mendicanti*, and the hall where the young pupils were wont to assemble.

The position of the count with regard to the learned professor was for some years past much changed. Zustiniani was no longer the musical antagonist of Porpora, but in some sort his associate and leader. He had advanced considerable sums to the establishment over which the learned maestro presided, and out of gratitude the directors had invested him with the supreme control. The two associates then were as good friends as could be expected from the intolerance of the maestro with regard to the music in vogue—an intolerance, however, which was considerably softened by the assistance and resources lavished by the count in behalf of the propagation of serious music. Besides, the latter had brought out at San Samuel an opera which the maestro had written.

"My dear master," said Zustiniani, drawing Porpora aside, "you must not only give me one of your pupils for the theatre, but say which of them is best calculated to replace Corilla. That artist is worn out, her voice has decayed, her caprices ruin us, and the public will be disgusted. Truly, we must obtain a *succeditrice*." Pardon, dear reader, for this was said in Italian, and the count made no mistake.

"I have not got what you require," replied Porpora, dryly.

"What! my dear maestro," exclaimed the count, "you are not going to fall back into your dark moods? Is it after all the sacrifices and all the devotion which I have manifested towards you, that you are going to deny me a slight favor when I ask your assistance and advice in my own behalf?"

"I should not be justified in doing so," replied the professor, "and what I have just said is the truth, told you by a friend, and with the desire to oblige you. I have not in my school a single person capable

of replacing Corilla. I do not estimate her higher than she deserves yet in declaring that the talent of this girl has no real worth in my eyes, I am forced to acknowledge that she possesses an experience, a skill, a facility, and a sympathy with the public, which can only be acquired by years of practice, and which could not be obtained by other debutantes for a long time."

"That is true," said the count; "but we made Corilla, we saw her begin, we procured the approbation of the public; her beauty gained her three-fourths of her success, and you have individuals equally agreeable in your school. You cannot deny that, master. Come, admit that Clorinda is the most beautiful creature in the universe."

"Yes, but saucy, simpering, intolerable.—The public perhaps may find her grimaces charming—but she sings false, she has neither soul nor intelligence. It is true that the public has only ears; but then she has neither memory nor address, and she could only save herself from condemnation by the happy charlatanism that succeeds with so many others."

Thus saying, the professor cast an involuntary glance upon Anzoletto, who, under favor of the count, and on pretence of listening to the class, had kept a little apart, attending to the conversation.

"It matters not," said Zustiniani, who heeded little the master's rancour; "I shall not give up my project. It is long since I have heard Clorinda. Let her come with five or six others, the prettiest that can be found. Come, Anzoletto," said he, smiling, "you are well enough attired to assume the grave air of a young professor. Go to the garden and speak to the most striking of these young beauties, and tell them that the professor and I expect them here."

Anzoletto obeyed, but whether through malice or address, he brought the ugliest, so that then Jacques might have said for once with truth, "Sofia was one-eyed, and Cattina was a cripple."

This *quid pro quo* was taken in good part: and after they had laughed in their sleeves, they issued them, in order to send those of their companions whom the professor named. A charming group soon made their appearance, with Clorinda at their head.

"What magnificent hair!" exclaimed the count, as the latter passed him with her superb tresses.

"There is much more *on* than *in* that head," said the professor, without deigning to lower his voice.

After an hour's trial, the count could stand it no longer, but with courteous expressions to the young ladies, retired full of consternation, after saying in the professor's ear, "we must not think of these eckatoos!"

"Would your Excellency permit me to say a word respecting the subject which occupies you," said Anzoletto in a low voice to the count as they descended the steps.

"Speak," said the count; "do you know this marvel whom we seek?"

"Yes, Eccellenza."

"In what sea will you fish up this precious pearl?"

"At the bottom of the class, where the jealous Porpora places her on the day when you pass your female battalion in review."

"What! is there a diamond in the school whose splendor has never reached my eyes? If Master Porpora has played me such a trick!—"

"Illustrious, the diamond of which I speak is not strictly part of the school: she is only a poor girl who sings in the choruses when they

require her services, and to whom the professor gives lessons partly through charity, but still more from love of his art."

"In that case her abilities must be extraordinary, for the professor is not easily satisfied, and in no way prodigal of his time and labor. Could I have heard her perchance without knowing it?"

"Your Excellency heard her long ago when she was but a child. Now she is a young woman—able, studious, wise as the professor himself, and capable of extinguishing Corilla on the first occasion that she sings a single air beside her in the theatre."

"Does she never sing in public? Did she not sing sometimes at vespers?"

"Formerly, your Excellency, the professor took pleasure in hearing her sing in the church: but since then the *scolari*, through jealousy and revenge, have threatened to chase her from the tribune if she reappears there by their side."

"She is a girl of bad conduct then?"

"Oh Heavens! she is a virgin, pure as the newly fallen snow! But she is poor and of mean extraction—like myself, Eccellenza, whom you yet deign to elevate by your goodness—and these wicked harpies have threatened to complain to you of bringing into their class a pupil who did not belong to it."

"Where can I hear this wonder?"

"Let your Highness order the professor to make her sing before you, and you can then judge of her voice and the amount of her talent."

"Your confidence inclines me to believe you. You say I heard her long since?—I cannot remember when."

"In the church of the Mendicanti, on a general rehearsal of the '*St. Ivo Regina*' of Pergolese."

"Oh, I remember now," exclaimed the count; "voice, accent, and intelligence equally admirable!"

"She was then but fourteen, my lord—no better than a child."

"Yes—but now I think of it, I remember she was not handsome."

"Not handsome, Eccellenza!" exclaimed Anzoletto quite astounded.

"She was called—let me see—was it not a Spanish name?—some thing out of the way?"

"It was Consuelo, my lord."

"Yes, that is the name; you were to marry her then, a step which made the professor and myself laugh a little. Consuelo—yes, it is the same; the favorite of the professor, an intelligent girl, but very ugly."

"Very ugly?" repeated Anzoletto, as if stupefied.

"Yes, my child. Do you still admire her?"

"She is *mon amie*, Illustrissimo."

"*Amie*! that is to say, sister or sweetheart, which of the two?"

"Sister, my master."

In that case I can give you an answer without paining you; your idea is devoid of common sense. To replace Corilla it would require an angel of beauty, and your Consuelo, if I remember rightly, was not only ugly but frightful!"

The count was accosted at this moment by one of his friends, and left Anzoletto, who was struck dumb with amazement, and who repeated with a sigh, "She is frightful!"

CHAPTER VII.

It may appear rather astonishing, dear reader, and yet it is very certain, that Anzoletto never had formed an opinion of the beauty or the ugliness of Consuelo. Consuelo was a being so solitary, so unknown in Venice, that no one had thought of seeking whether, beneath this veil of isolation and obscurity, intelligence and goodness had ended by showing themselves under an agreeable or insignificant form. Porpora, who had no senses but for his art, had only seen in her the artist. Her neighbors of the Corte Minelli observed, without attaching any blame to it, her innocent love for Anzoletto. At Venice they are not particular on this score. They predicted indeed very often, that she would be unhappy with this youth without business or calling, and they counselled her rather to seek to establish herself with some honest workman. But she replied to them that, as she herself was without friends or support, Anzoletto suited her perfectly, and as for six years no day had passed without their seeing them together, never seeking any concealment and never quarrelling, they had ended by accustoming themselves to their free and apparently indissoluble union, and no neighbor had ever paid court to the *amica* of Anzoletto. Whether was this owing to her supposed engagement or to her extreme poverty!—or was it, perhaps, that her person had no attractions for them? This last supposition is the most probable.

Every one knows, however, that from fourteen to fifteen, girls are generally thin, out of sorts, without harmony either as to proportions or movements. Towards fifteen, to use a common expression, they undergo a sort of fusion, after which they become, if not pretty, at least agreeable. It has even been remarked that it is not desirable that a young girl should grow good-looking too early.

Consuelo, like others, had gained all the benefits of adolescence; she was no longer called ugly, simply because she had ceased to be so. As she was neither Dauphine nor infanta, however, there were no crowds of courtiers to proclaim that her royal highness grew day by day more beautiful; and no one was sufficiently solicitous to tell Anzoletto that he should have no occasion to blush for his bride.

Since Anzoletto had heard her termed ugly at an age when the word had neither sense nor meaning, he had forgotten to think about it; his vanity had taken another direction. The theatre and renown were all his care, and he had no time to think of conquests. His curiosity was appeased—he had no more to learn. At twenty-two he was in a measure *blasé*; yet his affection for Consuelo was tranquil as at eighteen, despite a few chaste kisses, taken as they were given, without shame.

Let us not be astonished at this calmness and propriety on the part of a youth in other respects not over particular. Our young people had ceased to live as described at the beginning of this history. Consuelo, now nearly sixteen, continued her somewhat wandering life, leaving the conservatory to eat her rice and repeat her lesson on the steps of the Piazzetta with Anzoletto. When her mother, worn out by fatigue, ceased to sing for charity in the coffee-houses in the evening, the poor creature sought refuge in one of the most miserable garrets of the Corte Minelli, to die upon a pallet. Then the good Consuelo

quitting her no more, entirely changed her manner of life. Exclusive of the hours when the professor deigned to give his lessons, she labored sometimes at her needle, sometimes at counter-point, but always at the bedside of her imperious and despairing mother, who had cruelly ill-treated her in her infancy, and who now presented the frightful spectacle of a last struggle without courage and without virtue. The filial piety and devotion of Consuelo never flagged for a single instant. The pleasures of youth and of her free and wandering life—even love itself—all were sacrificed without a moment's hesitation or regret. Anzoletto made bitter complaints, but finding reproaches useless, resolved to forget her and to amuse himself; but this he found impossible. He had none of the industry of Consuelo; he learned quickly but imperfectly the inferior lessons which his teacher to gain the salary promised by Zustiniani, gave him equally quickly and equally ill. This was all very well for Anzoletto, in whom prodigal nature made up for lost time and the effects of inferior instruction, but there were hours of leisure during which the friendly and cheerful society of Consuelo were found sadly wanting. He tried to addict himself to the habits of his class; he frequented public-houses, and wasted with young scapegraces the trifling bounties he enjoyed through the favor of Count Zustiniani. This sort of life pleased him for some weeks; but he soon found that his health and his voice were becoming sensibly impaired—that the *far-niente* was not excess, and that excess was not his element. Preserved from bad passions through a higher species of self-love, he retired to solitude and study; but they only presented a frightful mixture of gloom and difficulty. He saw that Consuelo was no less necessary to his talents than to his happiness. She was studious and persevering—living in an atmosphere of music as a bird in the air, or a fish in the wave—loving to overcome difficulties without inquiring into their nature any more than a child—but impelled to combat the obstacles and penetrate the mysteries of art, by an instinct invisible as that which causes the germ to penetrate the soil and seek the air. Consuelo enjoyed one of those rare and happy temperaments for which labor is an enjoyment, a sort of repose, a necessary condition, and to which inaction would be an effort, a waste, in short, a disease—if inaction indeed to such natures were possible. But they know nothing of the kind; in apparent idleness they still labor, but it is not so much reverie as meditation. In seeing them act, one would suppose that they were creating, whereas they but give expression to what has been already created. You will tell me, gentle reader, that you have never known such rare temperaments; to which I shall reply, dearly beloved reader, that I have met with but one. If so, am I older than you? Why can I not tell you that I have analyzed in my own poor brain the divine mystery of this intellectual activity? But alas! friendly reader, it is neither you nor I who shall study this in ourselves.

Consuelo worked on, amusing herself the while. She persisted for hours together, either by free and capricious flights of song or by study on the book, to vanquish difficulties which would have repelled Anzoletto if left to himself; and without any idea of emulation or premeditated design, she forced him to follow her, to second her, to comprehend and to reply to her—sometimes, as it were, in the midst of almost childish bursts of laughter—sometimes borne away by the poetic and creative *fantasia*, which pervades the popular temperament of Italy and Spain. During the many years in which he was

influenced by the genius of Consuelo—drinking at a source which he did not comprehend—copying her without knowing it—Anzoleto, held besides in chains by his indolence, had become a strange compound of knowledge and ignorance, of inspiration and frivolity, of power and weakness, of boldness and awkwardness, such as had plunged Porpora at the last rehearsal into a perfect labyrinth of meditation and conjecture. The maestro did not know the secret of the riches he had borrowed from Consuelo; for having once severely scolded the little one for her intimacy with this great idler, he had never again seen them together.—Consuelo, bent upon maintaining the good-will of her master, took care whenever she saw him at a distance, if in company with Anzoleto, to hide herself with agile bounds behind a column, or to disappear in the recesses of some gondola.

These precautions were still continued, when, Consuelo having become a nurse, Anzoleto, unable to support her absence, and feeling life, hope, inspiration, and even existence failing him, returned to share her sedentary life, and to bear with her the sourness and angry whims of the dying woman. Some months before the close of her life, the unhappy creature, broken down by her sufferings, and vanquished by the filial piety of her daughter, felt her soul opened to milder emotions. She habituated herself to the attentions of Anzoleto, who, although little accustomed to acts of friendship and self-denial, displayed a zealous kindness and good-will towards the feeble sufferer. Anzoleto had an even temper and gentle demeanor. His perseverance towards her and Consuelo at length won her heart, and in her last moments she made them promise never to abandon each other. Anzoleto promised, and even felt in this solemn act a depth of feeling to which he had been hitherto a stranger. The dying woman made the engagement easier to him by saying:—"Let her be your friend, your sister, or your wife, only leave her not; she knows none, has listened to none, but you."

Consuelo, now an orphan, continued to ply her needle and study music, as well to procure means for the present as to prepare for her union with Anzoleto. During two years he continued to visit her in her garret, without experiencing any passion for her, or being able to feel it for others, so much did the charm of being with her seem preferable to all other things.

Without fully appreciating the lofty faculties of his companion, he could see that her attainments and capabilities were superior to those of any of the singers at San Samuel, or even to those of Corilla herself. To this habitual affection were now added the hope, and almost the conviction, that a community of interests would render their future existence at once brilliant and profitable. Consuelo thought little of the future: foresight was not among her good qualities. She would have cultivated music without any other end in view than that of fulfilling her vocation; and the community of interest which the practice of that art was to realise between her and her friend, had no other meaning to her than that of an association of happiness and affection. It was therefore without apprising her of it, that he conceived the hope of realizing their dreams; and learning that Zustiniani had decided on replacing Corilla, Anzoleto, sagaciously divining the wishes of his patron, had made the proposal which has already been mentioned.

But Consuelo's ugliness—this strange, unexpected, and invincible drawback, if the count indeed were not deceived—had struck terror

and consternation to his soul. So he retraced his steps to the Corte Minelli, stopping every instant to recal to his mind in a new point of view the likeness of his friend, and to repeat again and again, "Not pretty?—ugly?—frightful?"

CHAPTER VIII.

"WHY do you stare at me so?" said Consuelo, seeing him enter her apartment, and fix a steady gaze upon her, without uttering a word. "One would think you had never seen me before."

"It is true, Consuelo," he replied; "I have never seen you."

"Are you mad?" continued she; "I know not what you mean."

"Ah, Heaven! I fear I am," exclaimed Anzoleto. "I have a dark, hideous spot in my brain, which prevents me from seeing you."

"Holy Virgin! you are ill, my friend!"

"No, dear girl; calm yourself, and let us endeavor to see clearly. Tell me, Consuelo, do you think me handsome?"

"Surely I do, since I love you."

"But if you did not love me, what would you think of me then?"

"How can I tell?"

"But when you look at other men, do you know whether they are handsome or ugly?"

"Yes; But I think you handsomer than the handsomest."

"Is it because I am so, or because you love me?"

"Both one and the other, I think. Everybody calls you handsome, and you know that you are so. But why do you ask?"

"I wish to know if you would love me were I frightful?"

"I should not be aware of it, perhaps."

"Do you believe, then, that it is possible to love one who is ugly?"

"Why not, since you love me?"

"Are you ugly, then, Consuelo? Tell me truly—are you indeed ugly?"

"They have told me so—do you not see it?"

"No; in truth, I see no such thing."

"In that case, I am handsome enough, and am well satisfied."

"Hold there, Consuelo. When you look at me so sweetly, so lovingly, so naturally, I think you prettier far than Corilla; but I want to know if it be an illusion of my imagination, or reality. I know the expression of your countenance; I know that it is good, and that it pleases me. When I am angry, it calms me; when sorrowful, it cheers me; when I am cast down, it revives me. But your features Consuelo, I cannot tell if they are ugly or not."

"But I ask you once more, what does it matter?"

"I must know; tell me, therefore, if it be possible for a handsome man to love an ugly woman."

"You loved my dear mother, who was no better than a spectre, and I loved her so dearly!"

"And did you think her ugly?"

"No; did you?"

"I thought nothing about it. But to love with passion, Consuelo—for, in truth, I love you passionately, do I not? I cannot live without you—cannot quit you. Is not that love, Consuelo?"

"Could it be anything else?"

"Could it be friendship?"

"Yes, it might, indeed, be friendship—"

Here the much surprised Consuelo paused and looked attentively at Anzoletto, while he, falling into a melancholy reverie, asked himself for the first time whether it was love or friendship he felt for Consuelo, or whether the moderation and propriety of his demeanor were the result of respect or indifference. For the first time he looked at the young girl with the eyes of a youth; analysed, not without difficulty, her face, her form, her eyes—all the details in fine of which he had had hitherto but a confused ideal in his mind. For the first time Consuelo was embarrassed by the demeanor of her friend. She blushed, her heart beat with violence, and she turned aside her head, unable to support Anzoletto's gaze. At last, as he preserved a silence which she did not care to break, a feeling of anguish took possession of her heart, tears rolled down her cheeks, and she hid her face in her hands.

"Oh, I see it plainly," she said; "you have come to tell me that you will no longer have me for your sweetheart."

"No, no; I did not say that—I did not say that!" exclaimed Anzoletto, terrified by the tears which he had caused her to shed for the first time; and, restored to all his brotherly-feeling, he folded Consuelo in his arms. But as she turned her head aside, he kissed, in place of her calm, cool cheek, a glowing shoulder, ill-concealed by a handkerchief of black lace.

"I know not well what ails me," exclaimed Consuelo, tearing herself from his arms; "I think I am ill; I feel as if I were going to die."

"You must not die," said Anzoletto, following and supporting her in his arms; "you are fair, Consuelo—yes, you are fair!"

In truth, she was then very fair. Anzoletto never inquired how, but he could not help repeating it, for his heart felt it warmly.

"But," said Consuelo, pale and agitated, "why do you insist so on finding me pretty to-day?"

"Would you not wish to be so, dear Consuelo?"

"Yes, for you!"

"And for others too?"

"It concerns me not."

"But if it influenced our future prospects?" Here, Anzoletto, seeing the uneasiness which he caused his betrothed, told her candidly all that had occurred between the count and himself. And when he came to repeat the expressions, anything but flattering, which Justiniani had employed when speaking of her, the good Consuelo, now perfectly tranquil, could not restrain a violent burst of laughter, drying at the same time her tear-stained eyes.

"Well?" said Anzoletto, surprised at this total absence of vanity, "do you take it so coolly? Ah! Consuelo, I can see that you are a little coquette. You know very well that you are not ugly."

"Listen," said she, smiling: "since you are so serious about trifles, I find I must satisfy you a little. I never was a coquette, and not being handsome, do not wish to seem ridiculous. But as to being ugly, I am no longer so."

"Indeed! Who has told you?"

"First it was my mother, who was never uneasy about my ugliness. I heard her often say that she was far less passable than I in her in-

fancy, and yet when she was twenty she was the handsomest girl in Burgos. You know that when the people looked at her in the caf  s where she sang, they said, 'this woman must have been once beautiful' See, my good friend, beauty is fleeting; when its possessor is sunk in poverty it lasts for a moment, and then is no more. I might become handsome—who knows?—if I was not to be too much exhausted; if I got sound rest, and did not suffer too much from hunger."

"Consuelo, we will never part. I shall soon be rich; you will then want for nothing, and can be pretty at your ease."

"Heaven grant it; but God's will be done!"

"But all this is nothing to the purpose; we must see if the count will find you handsome enough for the theatre."

"That hard-hearted count! Let us trust that he will not be too exacting."

"First and foremost then, you are not ugly?"

"No; I am not ugly. I heard the glass-blower over the way there say not long ago to his wife—'Do you know that little Consuelo is not so much amiss. She has a fine figure, and when she laughs she fills one's heart with joy; but when she sings, oh, how beautiful she is!'"

"And what did the glass-blower's wife say?"

"She said—'What is it to you? Mind your business. What has a married man to do with young girls?'"

"Did she appear angry?"

"Oh, very angry."

"It is a good sign. She knew that her husband was not far wrong. Well, what more?"

"Why, the Countess Moncenigo, who gives out work, and has always been kind to me, said last week to Dr. Ancillo, who was there when I called—'Only look, doctor, how this *Zitella* has grown, how fair she is and how well made!'"

"And what did the doctor say?"

"'Very true, madam,' said he; '*per Bacco!* I should not have known her: she is one of those constitutions that become handsome when they gain a little fat. She will be a fine girl, you will see that.'"

"And what more?"

"Then the superior of Santa Chiara, for whom I work embroidery for the altars, said to one of the sisters—'Does not Consuelo resemble Santa Cecilia? Every time that I pray before her image I cannot help thinking of this little one, and then I pray for her that she may never fall into sin, and that she may never sing but for the church.'"

"And what said the sister?"

"The sister replied—'It is true, mother, it is quite true.' As for myself, I hastened to the church and looked at their Cecilia, which is painted by a great master, and is very, very beautiful."

"And like you?"

"A little."

"And you never told me that?"

"I never thought of it."

"Dear Consuelo, you are beautiful then?"

"I do not think so; but I am not so ugly as they said. One thing is certain—they no longer call me ugly. Perhaps they think it would give me pain to hear it."

"Let me see, little Consuelo; look at me. First, you have the most beautiful eyes in the world."

"But my mouth is large," said Consuelo, laughing, and taking up a broken piece of looking glass, which served her as a *pysche*.

"It is not very small indeed, but then what glorious teeth!" said Anzoletto; "they are as white as pearls, and when you smile you show them all."

"In that case you must say something that will make me laugh when we are with the count."

"You have magnificent hair, Consuelo."

"Oh yes; would you like to see it?" And she loosed the pins which fastened it, and her dark shining locks fell in flowing masses to the floor.

"Your chest is broad, your waist small, your shoulders—ah, they are beautiful, Consuelo!"

"My feet," said Consuelo, turning the conversation, "are not so bad;" and she held up a little Andalusian foot, a beauty almost unknown in Venice.

"Your hand is beautiful, also," said Anzoletto, kissing for the first time the hand which he had hitherto clasped only in companionship. "Let me see your arms."

"But you have seen them a hundred times," said she, removing her long gloves.

"No; I have never seen them," said Anzoletto, whose admiration every moment increased, and he again relapsed into silence, gazing with beaming eyes on the young girl, in whom each moment he discovered new beauties.

All at once Consuelo, embarrassed by this display, endeavored to regain her former quiet enjoyment, and began to pace up and down the apartment, gesticulating and singing from time to time in a somewhat exaggerated fashion, several passages from the lyric drama, just as if she were a performer on the stage.

"Magnificent!" exclaimed Anzoletto, ravished with surprise at finding her capable of a display which she had not hitherto manifested.

"It is anything but magnificent," said Consuelo, reseating herself; "and I hope you only spoke in jest."

"It would be magnificent on the boards, at any rate. I assure you there would not be a gesture too much. Corilla would burst with jealousy, for it is just the way she gets on when they applaud her to the skies."

"My dear Anzoletto, I do not wish that Corilla should grow jealous about any such nonsense; if the public were to applaud me merely because I knew how to ape her, I would never appear before them."

"You would do better, then?"

"I hope so, or I should never attempt it."

"Very well; how would you manage?"

"I cannot say."

"Try."

"No; for all this is but a dream; and until they have decided whether I am ugly or not, we had better not plan any more fine projects. Perhaps we are a little mad just now, and after all, as the count has said, Consuelo may be frightful."

This last supposition caused Anzoletto to take his leave.

CHAPTER IX.

At this period of his life, though almost unknown to biographers Porpora, one of the best Italian composers of the eighteenth century, the pupil of Scarlatti, the master of Hasse, Farinelli, Cafarielli, Minigotti, Salimbini, Hubert (surnamed the Porporino), of Gabrielli, of Monteni—in a word, the founder of the most celebrated school of his time—languished in obscurity at Venice, in a condition bordering on poverty and despair. Nevertheless, he had formerly been director of the conservatory of the *Ospedaletto* in the same city, and this period of his life, had been even brilliant. He had there written and produced his best operas, his most beautiful cantatas, and his finest church music. Invited to Vienna in 1728, he had there, after some effort, gained the favor of the Emperor Charles VI. Patronized at the court of Saxony, where he gave lessons to the electoral princess, Porpora from that repaired to London, where he rivalled for nine or ten years the glory of Handel, the master of masters, whose star at that period had begun to pale. The genius of the latter however obtained the supremacy, and Porpora, wounded in pride and purse, had returned to Venice to resume the direction of another conservatory. He still composed operas, but found it difficult to get them represented. His last, although written in Venice, was brought out in London, where it had no success. His genius had incurred these serious assaults, against which fortune and glory might perhaps have sustained him; but the neglect and ingratitude of Hasse, Farinelli, and Cafarielli, broke his heart, soured his character, and poisoned his old age. He is known to have died miserable and neglected in his eightieth year at Naples.

At the period when Count Zustiniani, foreseeing and almost desiring the defection of Corilla, sought to replace her, Porpora was subject to violent fits of ill-humor, not always without foundation; for if they preferred and sang at Venice the music of Jomelli, of Lotti, of Carissimi, of Gasparini, and other excellent masters, they also adopted without discrimination the productions of Cocchi, of Buini, of Salvator Apollini, and other local composers, whose common and easy style served to flatter mediocrity. The operas of Hasse could not please a master justly dissatisfied. The worthy but unfortunate Porpora, therefore, closing his heart and ears alike to modern productions, sought to crush them under the glory and authority of the ancients. He judged too severely of the graceful compositions of Galuppi, and even the original fantasies of Chiozetto, a favorite composer at Venice. In short, he would only speak of Martini, Durante, Monte Verde, and Palestrina; I do not know if even Marcello and Iac found favor in his eyes. It was therefore with reserve and dissatisfaction that he received the first overtures of Zustiniani concerning his poor pupil, whose good fortune and glory he nevertheless desired to promote; for he had too much experience not to be aware of her abilities and her deserts. But he shook his head at the idea of the profanation of a genius so pure, and so liberally nurtured on the sacred manna of the old masters. and he replied, "Take her if it must be so—this spotless soul, this stainless intellect—cast her to the dogs, hand her over to the brutes, for such seems the destiny of genius at the period in which we live."

This dissatisfaction, at once grave and ludicrous, gave the count a lofty idea of the merit of the pupil from the high value which the severe master attached to it.

"So, so, my dear maestro," he exclaimed, "is that indeed your opinion? is this Consuelo a creature so extraordinary, so divine?"

"You shall hear her," said Porpora, with an air of resignation, while he murmured, "it is her destiny."

The count succeeded in raising the spirits of the master from their state of depression, and led him to expect a serious reform in the choice of operas. He promised to exclude inferior productions so soon as he should succeed in getting rid of Corilla, to whose caprices he attributed their admission and success. He even dexterously gave him to understand that he would be very reserved as to Hasse; and declared that if Porpora would write an opera for Consuelo, the pupil would confer a double glory on her master in expressing his thoughts in a style which suited them, as well as realize a lyric triumph for San Samuel and for the count.

Porpora, fairly vanquished, began to thaw, and now secretly longed for the coming out of his pupil, as much as he had hitherto dreaded it from the fear that she should be the means of adding fresh lustre to the productions of his rivals. But as the count expressed some anxiety touching Consuelo's appearance, he refused to permit him to hear her in private, and without preparation.

"I do not wish you to suppose," said he, in reply to the count's questions and entreaties, "that she is a beauty. A poorly-dressed and timid girl, in presence of a nobleman and a judge—a child of the people, who has never been the object of the slightest attention—cannot dispense with some preparatory toilet. And, besides, Consuelo is one whose expression genius ennobles in an extraordinary degree. She must be seen and heard at the same time. Leave it all to me; if you are not satisfied you may leave her alone, and I shall find out means of making her a good nun, who will be the glory of the school, and the instructress of future pupils." Such, in fact, was the destiny which Porpora had planned for Consuelo.

When he saw his pupil again, he told her that she was to be heard and an opinion given of her by the count; but as she was uneasy on the score of her looks, he gave her to understand that she would not be seen—in short, that she would sing behind the organ-screen, the count being merely present at the service in the church. He advised her, however, to dress with some attention to appearance, as she would have to be presented, and though the noble master was poor, he gave her money for the purpose. Consuelo, frightened and agitated, busied for the first time in her life with attention to her person, hastened to see after her toilet and her voice. She tried the last, and found it so fresh, so brilliant, and so full, that Anzoleto, to whom she sung, more than once repeated with ecstasy, "Alas! why should they require more than that she knows how to sing?"

CHAPTER X.

ON the eve of the important day, Anzoleto found Consuelo's door closed and locked; and after having waited for a quarter of an hour

on the stairs, he finally obtained permission to see his friend in her festal attire, the effect of which she wished to try before him. She had on a handsome flowered muslin dress, a lace handkerchief, and powder. She was so much altered, that Anzoletto was for some moments uncertain whether she had gained or lost by the change. The hesitation which Consuelo read in his eyes was as the stroke of a dagger to her heart.

"Ah!" said she, "I see very well that I do not please you. How can I hope to please a stranger, when he who loves me sees nothing agreeable in my appearance?"

"Wait a little," replied Anzoletto. "I like your elegant figure in those long stays, and the distinguished air which this lace gives you. The large folds of your petticoat suit you to admiration, but I regret your long black hair. However, it is the fashion, and to-morrow you must be a lady."

"And why must I be a lady? For my part I hate this powder, which fades one, and makes even the most beautiful grow old before her time. I have an artificial air under all these furbelows; in short, I am not satisfied with myself, and I see you are not so either. Oh! by-the-bye, I was at rehearsal this morning, and saw Clorinda, who also was trying on a new dress. She was so gay, so fearless, so handsome, (oh! she must be happy!—you need not look twice at her to be sure of her beauty), that I feel afraid of appearing beside her before the count."

"You may be easy; the count has seen her, and has heard her too."

"And did she sing badly?"

"As she always does."

"Ah! my friend, those rivalries spoil the disposition. A little while ago, if Clorinda, who is a good girl, notwithstanding her vanity, had been spoken of unfavorably by a judge, I should have been sorry for her from the bottom of my heart; I should have shared her grief and humiliation; and now I find myself rejoicing at it! To strive, to envy, to seek to injure each other, and all that for a man whom we love not, nay! but whom we know not! I feel very low-spirited, my dear love, and it seems to me as if I were as much frightened by the idea of succeeding as by that of failing. It seems as if our happiness was coming to a close, and that to-morrow, after the trial, whatever may be the result, I shall return to this poor apartment a different person from what I have hitherto lived in it."

Two large tears rolled down over Consuelo's cheeks.

"Well, are you going to cry now?" said Anzoletto. "What can you be thinking of? You will dim your eyes, and swell your eyelids. Your eyes, Consuelo! do not spoil your eyes, which are the most beautiful feature in your face."

"Or rather the least ugly," said she, wiping away her tears. "Come, when we give ourselves up to the world we have not even the right to weep."

Her friend tried to comfort her, but she was exceedingly dejected all the rest of the day; and in the evening, when she was again alone, she brushed out the powder, uncurled her ebon hair, and sleeked it, tried on a little black silk dress, well preserved, and still nearly new her usual Sunday garb, and regained a portion of her confidence on once more recognising herself in her mirror. Then she prayed fervently, and thought of her mother, until, melted to tears, she cried

herself to sleep. When Anzoletto came to see her the following day to take her to church, she was sitting at her spinnet, practising her first air, and her hair dressed as on every Sunday.—“What!” he exclaimed, “not dressed yet? unpowdered still? It is almost the hour; what can you be about, Consuelo?”

“My dear, she replied, steadily, “I wear my hair as it is. I am ready as I am. I am tranquil, and shall go thus. This fine black dress does not suit me. My black hair pleases you better than powder. These corsets do but check my breath. Do not endeavor to change my resolution; I have made up my mind. I have prayed to God to direct me, and my mother to watch over my conduct. God has directed me to be quiet and simple. My mother has visited me in my dreams, and she said what she always used to say: ‘Try to sing well, Providence will do the rest.’ I saw her take my fine dress, my laces, and my ribbons, and put them away in the cupboard; and then she laid my black frock and white muslin mantilla on the chair by the bedside; when I awoke, I locked up my full dress as I saw her do in the dream, and put on my black frock and mantilla, as you see me. I have more courage, now that I have given up the idea of pleasing by graces which I do not comprehend. Listen to my voice; after all, everything lies in that,”—and she sounded a note.

“Good Lord! we are ruined!” cried Anzoletto. “Your voice is *voilé*,* and your eyes are bloodshot. You have been crying all night, Consuelo. This is a pretty business! I say we are ruined! It is absurd to wear mourning on a holiday; besides, it is unlucky, and it does not become you. Come, be quick—put on your fine full dress, while I go and get you some rouge. You are pale as a ghost!”

The poor girl’s mind was again agitated, and her tears flowed afresh. Anzoletto was vexed more and more, and while they were still debating, the clock struck the fatal hour. Consuelo, pale and trembling, looked at herself for the last time in the little broken mirror. Then, turning round, sprang impetuously into Anzoletto’s arms. “Oh, my beloved,” she cried, “do not swear at me. Clasp me more closely in your arms, to give some color to my pale cheeks. Be your kiss to my cheeks as was the sacred fire which kindled Isaiah’s lips, and may God pardon us for doubting His assistance!”

Then she cast her mantilla eagerly over her head, snatched up her music books, and hurrying away her dispirited lover, made haste to the church of the Mendicanti, whither the crowd were already flocking, to listen to Porpora’s admirable music. Anzoletto, more dead than alive, went to seek the count, who had given him the meeting in the organ-loft, while Consuelo went up to the organ-loft, in which the choirs were already in air, with the professor at his desk. Consuelo was not aware that the count’s tribune was so contrived that he could look into the organ-loft more easily than into the church—that he had already fixed his eyes on her, and was watching her every gesture.

Her features, however, he could not yet distinguish, for on entering

* *VOILÉ*. We have thought it advisable to leave this word untranslated, although nothing in general is more abominable than to see books professing to be written in the English language, interlarded with foreign words or phrases. This word *voilé* is, however, a musical technicality, and can be expressed by no English word. It does not mean *MUSKY* exactly, nor *HOARSE*, nor *THICK*, but something intermediate. The literal meaning of the word being *VEILED* or *SHROUDED*, which, as applied to a voice in English, would be simply nonsense.

she knelt down, buried her face in her hands, and prayed fervently and devoutly. "Oh, my God," she cried, with the voice of the heart, "thou knowest that I seek not advancement for the humiliation of my rivals. Thou knowest that I have no thought to surrender myself to the world and worldly acts, abandoning thy love, and straying into the paths of vice. Thou knowest that pride dwells not in me, and that I implore thee to support me, and to swell my voice, and to expand my thoughts as I sing thy praises, only that I may dwell with him whom my mother permitted me to love."

When the first sounds of the orchestra called Consuelo to her place, she rose slowly, her mantilla fell from her shoulders, and her face was at length visible to the impatient and restless spectators in the neighboring tribune. But what marvellous change is here in this young girl, just now so pale, so cast down, so overwhelmed by fatigue and fear! The ether of heaven seemed to bedew her lofty forehead, while a gentle languor was diffused over the noble and graceful outlines of her figure. Her tranquil countenance expressed none of those petty passions, which seek, and as it were, exact applause. There was something about her solemn, mysterious, and elevated—at once lovely and affecting.

"Courage, my daughter," said the professor, in a low voice. "You are about to sing the music of a great master, and he is here to listen to you."

"Who?—Marcello?" said Consuelo, seeing the professor lay the Hymns of Marcello open on the desk.

"Yes—Marcello," replied he. "Sing as usual—nothing more and nothing less—and all will be well."

Marcello, then in the last year of his life, had in fact come once again to revisit Venice, his birth-place, where he had gained renown as composer, as writer, and as magistrate. He had been full of courtesy towards Porpora, who had requested him to be present in his school, intending to surprise him with the performance of Consuelo, who knew his magnificent "*I cieli immensi narrano*" by heart. Nothing could be better adapted to the religious glow that now animated the heart of this noble girl. So soon as the first words of this lofty and brilliant production shone before her eyes, she felt as if wafted into another sphere. Forgetting Count Zustiniani—forgetting the spiteful glances of her rivals—forgetting even Anzoletto—she thought only of God and of Marcello, who seemed to interpret those wondrous regions whose glory she was about to celebrate. What subject so beautiful!—what conception so elevated!—

*I cieli immensi narrano
Del grandi Iddio la gloria
Il firmamento lucido
All universo annunzia
Quanto sieno mirabili
Della sua destra le opere.*

A divine glow overspread her features, and the sacred fire of genius darted from her large black eyes, as the vaulted roof rang with that unequalled voice, and with those lofty accents which could only proceed from an elevated intellect, joined to a good heart. After he had listened for a few instants, a torrent of delicious tears streamed from Marcello's eyes. The count, unable to restrain his emotion, exclaimed—"By the Holy Rood, this woman is beautiful! She is Santa Cecilia, Santa Teresa, Santa Consuelo! She is poetry, she is music, she

his faith personified " As for Anzoletto, who had risen, and whose trembling knees barely sufficed to sustain him with the aid of his hands, which clung convulsively to the grating of the tribune, he fell back upon his seat, ready to swoon, intoxicated with pride and joy.

It required all the respect due to the locality, to prevent the numerous dilettanti in the crowd from bursting into applause, as if they had been in the theatre. The count would not wait till the close of the service to express his enthusiasm to Porpora and Consuelo. She was obliged to repair to the tribune of the count to receive the thanks and gratitude of Marcello. She found him so much agitated as to be hardly able to speak.

"My daughter," said he, with a broken voice, "receive the blessing of a dying man. You have caused me to forget for an instant the mortal suffering of many years. A miracle seems exerted in my behalf, and the unrelenting, frightful malady appears to have fled forever at the sound of your voice. If the angels above sing like you, I shall long to quit the world in order to enjoy that happiness which you have made known to me. Blessings then be on you, oh my child, and may your earthly happiness correspond with your deserts! I have heard Faustina, Romanina, Cuzzoni, and the rest; but they are not to be named along with you. It is reserved for you to let the world hear what it has never yet heard, and to make it feel what no man has ever yet felt."

Consuelo, overwhelmed by this magnificent eulogium, bowed her head, and almost bending to the ground, kissed, without being able to utter a word, the livid fingers of the dying man, then rising, she cast a look upon Anzoletto which seemed to say—"Ungrateful one, you knew not what I was!"

CHAPTER XL

DURING the remainder of the service, Consuelo displayed energy and resources which completely removed any hesitation Count Zustiniani might have felt respecting her. She led, she animated, she sustained the choir, displaying at each instant prodigious powers, and the varied qualities of her voice rather than the strength of her lungs. For those who know how to sing do not become tired, and Consuelo sang with as little effort and labor as others might have in merely breathing. She was heard above all the rest, not because she screamed like those performers, without soul and without breath, but because of the unimaginable sweetness and purity of her tones. Besides, she felt that she was understood in every minute particular. She alone, amidst the vulgar crowd, the shrill voices and imperfect trills of those around her, was a musician and a master. She filled therefore instinctively and without ostentation her powerful part, and as long as the service lasted she took the prominent place which she felt was necessary. After all was over, the choristers imputed it to her as a grievance and a crime; and those very persons who, failing and sinking, had as it were implored her assistance with their looks, claimed for themselves all the eulogiums which were given to the

school of Porpora at large. At these eulogiums the master smiled and said nothing: but he looked at Consuelo, and Anzoletto understood very well what his look meant.

After the business of the day was over, the choristers partook of a select collation which the count had caused to be served up in one of the parlors of the convent. Two immense tables in the form of a half-moon were separated by the grating, in the centre of which, over an immense gate, there was an opening to pass the dishes, which the count himself gracefully handed round to the principal nuns and pupils. The latter, dressed as Beguines, came by dozens alternately to occupy the vacant places in the interior of the cloisters. The superior, seated next the grating, was thus at the right hand of the count as regarded the outer hall; the seat on his left was vacant. Marcello, Porpora, the curate of the parish, and the officiating priests, some dilettanti patricians, and the lay administrators of the school, together with the handsome Anzoletto with his black coat and sword, had a place at the secular table. The young singers, though usually animated enough on such occasions, what with the pleasure of feasting, of conversing with gentlemen, the desire of pleasing, or at least of being observed—were on that day thoughtful and constrained. The project of the count had somehow expired—for what secret can be kept in a convent without oozing out?—and each of these young girls secretly flattered herself that she should be presented by Porpora in order to succeed Corilla. The professor was even malicious enough to encourage their illusions, whether to induce them to perform better before Marcello, or to revenge himself for the previous annoyance during their course of instruction. Certain it is that Clorinda, who was one of the out-pupils of the conservatory, was there in full attire, waiting to take her place beside the count; but when she saw the despised Consuelo, with her black dress and tranquil mein, the ugly creature whom she affected to despise, henceforth esteemed a musician and the only beauty of the school, she became absolutely frightful with anger—uglier that Consuelo had ever been—ugly as Venus herself would become were she actuated by a base and degrading motive. Anzoletto, exulting in his victory, looked attentively at her, seated himself beside her, and loaded her with absurd compliments which she had not sense to understand, but which nevertheless consoled her. She imagined she would revenge herself on her rival by attracting her betrothed, and spared no pains to intoxicate him with her charms. She was no match however for her companion, and Anzoletto was acute enough to load her with ridicule.

In the mean time Count Zustiniani, upon conversing with Consuelo, was amazed to find her endowed with as much tact, good sense, and conversational powers, as he had found in her talent and ability at church. Absolutely devoid of coquetry, there was a cheerful frankness and confiding good nature in her manner which inspired a sympathy equally rapid and irresistible. When the repast was at an end, he invited her to take the air in his gondola with his friends. Marcello was excused on account of his failing health; but Porpora, Barberigo, and other patricians were present, and Anzoletto was also of the party. Consuelo, who felt not quite at home among so many men, entreated the count to invite Clorinda; and Zustiniani, who did not suspect the badinage of Anzoletto with this poor girl, was not sorry to see him attracted by her. The noble count, thanks to the sprightliness of his character, his fine figure, his wealth, his thea-

tre, and also the easy manners of the country and of the time, had a strong spice of conceit in his character. Fired by the wine of Greece and by his musical enthusiasm, and impatient to revenge himself on the perfidious Corilla, he thought there was nothing more natural than to pay his court to Consuelo. Seating himself therefore beside her in the gondola, and so arranging that the young people should occupy the other extremity, he began to direct glances of a very significant character on his new flame. The simple and upright Consuelo took no notice. Her candor and good principle revolted at the idea that the protector of her friend could harbor ill designs; indeed, her habitual modesty, in no way affected by the splendid triumph of the day, would have made it impossible for her to believe it. She persisted therefore in respecting the illustrious signor, who adopted her along with Anzoletto, and continued to amuse herself with the party of pleasure, in which she could see no harm.

So much calmness and good faith surprised the count, who remained uncertain whether it was the joyous submission of an unresisting heart or the unsuspectingness of perfect innocence. At eighteen years of age, however, now, as well as a hundred years ago, especially with a friend such as Anzoletto, a girl could not be perfectly ignorant. Every probability was in favor of the count; nevertheless, each time that he seized the hand of his protégée, or attempted to steal his arm round her waist, he experienced an indefinable fear, and a feeling of uncertainty—almost of respect, which restrained him, he could not tell how.

Barberigo thought Consuelo sufficiently attractive, and he would in his turn gladly have maintained his pretensions, had he not been restrained by motives of delicacy towards the count. "Honor to all," said he to himself, as he saw the eyes of Zustiniani swimming in an atmosphere of voluptuous delight; "my turn will come next." Meanwhile the young Barberigo, not much accustomed to look at the stars when on excursions with ladies, inquired by what right Anzoletto should appropriate the fair Clorinda; and approaching, he endeavored to make him understand that his place was rather to take the oar than to flirt with ladies. Anzoletto, notwithstanding his acuteness, was not well-bred enough to understand at first what he meant; besides, his pride was fully on a par with the insolence of the patricians. He detested them cordially, and his apparent deference towards them merely served to disguise his inward contempt. Barberigo, seeing that he took a pleasure in opposing them, bethought himself of a cruel revenge. "By Jove!" said he to Clorinda, "your friend Consuelo is getting on at a furious rate; I wonder where she will stop. Not contented with setting the town crazy with her voice, she is turning the head of the poor count. He will fall madly in love, and Corilla's affair will be soon settled."

"Oh, there is nothing to fear," exclaimed Clorinda, mockingly; "Consuelo's affections are the property of Anzoletto here, to whom in fact she is engaged. They have been burning for each other, I don't know how many years."

"I do not know how many years may be swept away in the twinkling of an eye," said Barberigo, "especially when the eyes of Zustiniani take it upon them to cast the mortal dart. Do not you think so, beautiful Clorinda?"

Anzoletto could bear it no longer. A thousand serpents already found admission into his bosom. Hitherto such a suspicion had

never entered his mind. He was transported with joy at witnessing his friend's triumph, and it was as much to give expression to his transports as to amuse his vanity, that he occupied himself in rallying the unfortunate victim of the day. After some cross purposes with Barberigo, he feigned a sudden interest in a musical discussion which Porpora was keeping up with some of the company in the centre of the bark, and thus leaving a situation which he had now no longer any wish to retain, he glided along unobserved almost to the prow. He saw at the first glance that Zustiniani did not relish his attempt to interrupt this tête-à-tête with his betrothed, for he replied coolly, and even with displeasure. At last, after several idle questions badly received, he was advised to go and listen to the instructions which the great Porpora was giving on counterpoint.

"The great Porpora is not my master," said Anzoletto, concealing the rage which devoured him. "He is Consuelo's master; and if it would only please your Highness," said he, in a low tone, bending towards the count in an insinuating manner, "that my poor Consuelo should receive no other lessons than those of her old teacher.—"

"Dear and well-beloved Zoto," replied the count caressingly, but at the same time with profound malice, "I have a word for your ear;" and leaning towards him he added: "Your betrothed has doubtless received lessons from you that must render her invulnerable; but if I had any pretension to offer her others, I should at least have the right of doing so during one evening."

Anzoletto felt a chill run through his frame from head to foot.

"Will your gracious Highness deign to explain yourself?" said he, in a choking voice.

"It is soon done, my good friend," replied the count in a clear tone — "*gondola for gondola.*"

Anzoletto was terrified when he found that the count had discovered his tête-à-tête with Corilla. The foolish and audacious girl had boasted to Zustiniani in a violent quarrel that they had been together. The guilty youth vainly pretended astonishment. "You had better go and listen to Porpora about the principle of the Neapolitan schools," said the count; "you will come back and tell me about it, for it is a subject that interests me much."

"I perceive, your Excellency," replied Anzoletto, frantic with rage and ready to dash himself into the sea.

"What!" said the innocent Consuelo, astonished at his hesitation, "will you not go? Permit me, Signor Count; you shall see that I am willing to serve you." And before the count could interpose, she bounded lightly over the seat which separated her from her old master, and sat down close beside him.

The count, perceiving that matters were not far enough advanced, found it necessary to dissemble. "Anzoletto," said he, smiling, and pulling the ear of his protégé a little too hard, "my revenge is at an end. It has not proceeded nearly so far as your deserts; neither do I make the slightest comparison between the pleasure of conversing in the presence of a dozen persons with your fair friend and the tête-à-tête which you have enjoyed in a well-closed gondola with mine."

"Signor Count!" exclaimed Anzoletto, violently agitated, "I protest on my honor——"

"Where is your honor?" resumed the count; "is it in your left ear?" And he menaced the unfortunate organ with an inflection similar to that which he had just visited the right.

‘Do you suppose your protégé has so little sense,” said Anzoleto recovering his presence of mind, “as to be guilty of such folly?”

“Guilty or not,” rejoined the count, drily, “it is all the same to me.” And he seated himself beside Consuelo.

CHAPTER XII.

THE musical dissertation was continued until they reached the palace of Zustiniani, where they arrived towards midnight, to partake of coffee and sherbet. From the technicalities of art they had passed on to style, musical ideas, ancient and modern forms; from that to artists and their different modes of feeling and expressing themselves. Porpora spoke with admiration of his master Scarlatti, the first who had imparted a pathetic character to religious compositions; but there he stopped, and would not admit that sacred music should trespass upon profane, in tolerating ornaments, trill, and roulades.

“Do you, then, Signor,” said Anzoleto, “find fault with these and other difficult additions, which have nevertheless constituted the glory and success of your illustrious pupil Farinelli?”

“I only disapprove of them in the church,” replied the maestro; “I would have them in their proper place, which is the theatre. I wish them of a pure, sober, genuine taste, and appropriate in their modulations, not only to the subject of which they treat, but to the person and situation that are represented, and the passion which is expressed. The nymphs and shepherds may warble like any birds; their cadences may be like the flowing fountain; but Medea or Dido can only sob and roar like a wounded lioness. The coquette, indeed, may load her silly cavatina with capricious and elaborate ornament. Corilla excels in this description of music; but once she attempts to express the deeper emotions, the passions of the human heart, she becomes inferior even to herself. In vain she struggles, in vain she swells her voice and bosom—a note misplaced, an absurd roulade, parodies in an instant the sublimity which she had hoped to reach. You have all heard Faustina Bordini, now Madame Hasse: in situations appropriate to her brilliant qualities, she had no equal; but when Cuzzoni came, with her pure, deep feeling, to sing of pain, of prayer, or tenderness, the tears which she drew forth banished in an instant from your heart the recollection of Faustina. The solution of this is to be found in the fact that there is a showy and superficial cleverness, very different from lofty and creative genius. There is also that which amuses, which moves us, which astonishes, and which completely carries us away. I know very well that sudden and startling effects are now in fashion; but if I taught them to my pupils as useful exercises, I almost repent of it when I see the majority so abuse them—so sacrifice what is necessary to what is superfluous—the lasting emotion of the audience to cries of surprise and the starts of a feverish and transitory pleasure.

No one attempted to combat conclusions so eternally true with regard to all the arts, and which will be always applied to their varied manifestations by lofty minds. Nevertheless, the count, who was curious to know how Consuelo would sing ordinary music, pretended to

combat a little the severe notions of Porpora; but seeing that the modest girl, instead of refuting his heresies, ever turned her eyes to her old master as if to solicit his victorious replies, he determined to attack herself, and asked her "if she sang upon the stage with as much ability and purity as at church?"

"I do not think," she replied, with unfeigned humility, "that I should there experience the same inspirations, or acquit myself nearly so well."

"This modest and sensible reply satisfies me," said the count; "and I feel assured that if you will condescend to study those brilliant difficulties of which we every day become more greedy, you will sufficiently inspire an ardent, curious, and somewhat spoiled public."

"Study!" replied Porpora, with a meaning smile.

"Study!" cried Anzoletto, with superb disdain.

"Yes, without doubt," replied Consuelo, with her accustomed sweetness. "Though I have sometimes labored in this direction, I do not think I should be able to rival the illustrious performers who have appeared in our time."

"You do not speak sincerely," exclaimed Anzoletto, with animation. "Eccellenza, she does not speak the truth. Ask her to try the most elaborate and difficult airs in the repertory of the theatre, and you will see what she can do."

"If I did not think she were tired," said the count, whose eyes sparkled with impatience and curiosity. Consuelo turned hers artlessly to Porpora, as if to await his command.

"Why, as to that," said he, "such a trifle could not tire her; and as we are here a select few, we can listen to her talent in every description of music. Come, Signor Count, choose an air, and accompany it yourself on the harpsichord."

"The emotion which the sound of her voice would occasion me," replied Zustiniani, "would cause me to play falsely. Why not accompany her yourself, maestro?"

"I should wish to see her sing," continued Porpora; "for between us be it said, I have never seen her sing. I wish to know how she demeans herself, and what she does with her mouth and with her eyes. Come, my child, arise; it is for me as well as for you that this trial is to be made."

"Let me accompany her, then," said Anzoletto, seating himself at the instrument.

"You will frighten me, O my master!" said Consuelo to Porpora.

"Fools alone are timid," replied the master. "Whoever is inspired with the love of art need fear nothing. If you tremble it is because you are vain; if you lose your resources, it is because they are false; and if so, I shall be one of the first to say: 'Consuelo is good for nought.'"

And without troubling himself as to what effect these tender encouragements might produce, the professor donned his spectacles, placed himself before his pupil, and began to beat the time on the harpsichord to give the true movement of the ritornella. They chose a brilliant, strange, and difficult air from an opera buffa of Galuppi, — *The Diavolessa*, — in order to test her in a species of art the most opposite to that in which she had succeeded in the morning. The young girl enjoyed a facility so prodigious as to be able, almost without study, and as if in sport, to overcome, with her pliable and powerful voice, all the difficulties of execution then known. Porpora had

recommended and made her repeat such exercises from time to time, in order to see that she did not neglect them; but he was quite unaware of the ability of his wonderful pupil in this respect. As if to revenge himself for the bluntness which he had displayed, Consuelo was roguish enough to add to *The Diavolessa* a multitude of turns and ornaments until then esteemed impracticable, but which she improvised with as much unconcern and calmness as if she had studied them with care.

These embellishments were so skilful in their modulations, of a character so energetic, wild, and startling, and mingled in the midst of their most impetuous gaiety with accents so mournful, that a shudder of terror replaced the enthusiasm of the audience; and Porpora rising suddenly, cried out with a loud voice: "You are the devil in person!"

Consuelo brought her air to a close with a *crescendo di forza*, which produced bursts of applause, and taking her seat again began laughing merrily.

"Naughty girl," cried Porpora. "This trick you have played me, deserves the gallows. You have made a fool of me, concealing from me half your studies and powers. It is many a day since you have had ought to learn of me; and you have taken my lessons treacherously; to steal my secrets of composition and of teaching, I fancy, and so to outdo me in everything, and make me pass for an old-fashioned pedagogue."

"Master mine," Consuelo made reply, "what have I done but imitate your trick upon the Emperor Charles? You have related that to me already, many times.—How his Imperial Majesty detested trills, and forbade your introducing one into your oratorio; and how, after obeying his orders rigidly unto the very end of the piece, you gave him a *divertissement* at the last fugue, in perfectly good taste, beginning with four ascending trills, afterwards repeated infinitely in the *stretto* by all the parts. You have discoursed all this evening on the abuse of ornament, and you end by ordering me to execute them. I executed too many, in order to prove myself capable of extravagance—a fault to which I willingly plead guilty."

"I tell you that you are Beelzebub incarnate," answered Porpora. "Now then play some human air, and sing it according to your own notions, for I perceive that I, at least, can teach you no longer."

"You will always be my revered, always my beloved master," cried she, falling on his neck and clasping him in her arms. "It is to you only that I owe my livelihood, my instructions for the last ten years. Oh, master, I have heard say that you have formed but ungrateful pupils; but may God deprive me at once of the power of living and of singing, if my heart is tainted with the full venom of ingratitude!"

Porpora grew pale, spoke a few indistinct words, and kissed the brow of his pupil paternally; but with the kiss he left a tear, which Consuelo, who would not wipe it, felt drying on her forehead,—the icy bitter tear of unhappy age, and unappreciated genius. A sort of superstitious horror overwhelmed her with deep emotion, and her gaiety was overshadowed, and her liveliness extinguished for the night. An hour afterwards, when all the set terms of admiration had been lavished on her—not of that only, but of rapture and surprise—without drawing her from her gloom, they asked for a specimen of her dramatic skill. She sang a grand aria of Jomelli's opera, "*Didone Abandonata*." Never had she felt before the wish to give her sadness

ven. In the pathetic, the simple, the grand—she was sublime; and her face showed fairer yet, and more expressive than it had done while she sang in church. Her complexion was flushed with a feverish glow; her eyes lightened with a strange and lurid lustre. She was a saint no longer—but what suited better far, she was a woman tortured by devouring love. The count, his friend Barberigo, Anzoletto, all the auditors, even, I believe, to old Porpora himself, were almost beside themselves. Clorinda was choking with envy. Then Consuelo, on the count's telling her that her engagement should be drawn and signed to-morrow, asked him to promise her yet another favor, and to plight his word like a knight of old, to grant a request which he had not heard. He did so, and the party broke up, exhausted with that sweet emotion which is produced by great effect, and wielded at will by great intellects.

CHAPTER XIII.

WHILE Consuelo was achieving all these triumphs, Anzoletto had lived so completely in her as to forget himself; nevertheless, when the count in dismissing him mentioned the engagement of his betrothed, without saying a word of his own, he called to mind the coolness with which he had been treated during the evening, and the dread of being ruined without remedy poisoned all his joy. The idea darted across his mind to leave Consuelo on the steps, leaning on Porpora's arm, and to return to cast himself at the feet of his benefactor; but as at this moment he hated him, we must say in his praise that he withstood the temptation to humiliate himself. When he had taken leave of Porpora, and repaired to accompany Consuelo along the canal, the gondoliers of the count informed him that by the commands of their master the gondola waited to conduct the signora home. A cold perspiration burst upon his forehead. "The signora," said he, rudely, "is accustomed to use her own limbs; she is much obliged to the count for his attentions."

"By what right do you refuse for her?" said the count, who was close behind him. Anzoletto turned and saw him, not with uncovered head, as a man who dismissed his guests, but with his cloak thrown over his shoulders, his hat in one hand, and his sword in the other, as one who seeks adventures. Anzoletto was so enraged, that a thought of stabbing him with the long narrow knife which a Venetian always carried about concealed on his person, flashed across his mind. "I hope, Signora," said the count, in a firm voice, "that you will not offer me the affront of refusing my gondola to take you home, and causing me the vexation of not permitting me to assist you to enter it."

Consuelo, always confiding, and suspecting nothing of what passed around her, accepted the offer, thanked him, and placing her pretty rounded elbow in the hand of the count, she sprang without ceremony into the gondola. Then a dumb but energetic dialogue took place between the Count and Anzoletto. The count, with one foot on the bank and one on the bark, measured Anzoletto with his eye, who, standing on the last step of the stairs leading from the water's edge

to the palace, measured him with a fierce air in return, his hand in his breast, and grasping the handle of his knife. A single step, and the count was lost. What was most characteristic of the Venetian disposition in this rapid and silent scene, was, that the two rivals watched each other without either hastening the catastrophe. The count was determined to torture his rival by apparent irresolution, and he did so at leisure, although he saw and comprehended the gesture of Anzoletto. On his side, Anzoletto had strength to wait, without betraying himself, until it would please the count to finish his malicious pleasantry or to surrender life. This pantomime lasted two minutes, which seemed to Anzoletto an age, and which the count supported with stoical disdain. The count then made a profound bow to Consuelo, and turning towards his protégé, "I permit you also," said he, "to enter my gondola; in future you will know how a gallant man conducts himself;" and he stepped back to allow Anzoletto to pass into the boat. Then he gave orders to the gondolier to row to the Corte Minelli, while he remained standing on the bank, motionless as a statue. It almost seemed as if he awaited some new attempt at murder on the part of his humiliated rival.

"How does the count know your abode?" was the first word which Anzoletto addressed to his betrothed, when they were out of sight of the palace of Zustiniani.

"Because I told him," replied Consuelo.

"And why did you tell him?"

"Because he asked me."

"You do not guess then why he wished to know?"

"Probably to convey me home."

"Do you think so? Do you think he will not come to see you?"

"Come to see me? what madness! And in such a wretched abode! That would be an excess of politeness which I should never wish."

"You do well not to wish it, Consuelo; for excess of shame might ensue from this excess of honor."

"Shame! and why shame to me? In good faith I do not understand you to-night, dear Anzoletto; and I think it rather odd that you should speak of things I do not comprehend, instead of expressing your joy at our incredible and unexpected success."

"Unexpected indeed," returned Anzoletto, bitterly.

"It seemed to me that at vespers, and while they applauded me this evening, you were even more enchanted than I was. You looked at me with such passionate eyes that my happiness was doubled in seeing it reflected from you. But now you are gloomy and out of sorts, just as when we wanted bread, and our prospects were uncertain."

"And now you wish that I should rejoice in the future? Possibly it is no longer uncertain, but assuredly it presents nothing cheering for me."

"What more would we have? It is hardly a week since you appeared before the count and were received with enthusiasm."

"My success was infinitely eclipsed by yours—you know it well."

"I hope not; besides, if it were so, there can be no jealousy between us."

These ingenuous words, uttered with the utmost truth and tenderness, calmed the heart of Anzoletto. "Ah, you are right," said he clasping his betrothed in his arms; "we cannot be jealous of each other, we cannot deceive each other:" but as he uttered these words he recalled with remorse his adventure with Corilla, and it occurred to

him that the count, in order to punish him, might reveal his conduct to Consuelo whenever he had reason to suppose that she in the least encouraged him. He fell into a gloomy reverie, and Consuelo also became pensive.

"Why," said she, after a moment's silence, "did you say that we could not deceive each other? It is a great truth surely, but why did you just then think of it?"

"Hush! let us not say another word in this gondola," said Anzoletto; "they will hear what we say, and tell it to the count. This velvet covering is very thin, and these palace gondolas have recesses four times as deep and as large as those for hire. Permit me to accompany you home," said he, when they had been put ashore at the entrance of the Corte Minelli.

"You know that it is contrary to our usage, and engagement," replied she.

"Oh do not refuse me," said Anzoletto, "else you will plunge me into fury and despair."

Frightened by his tone and his words, Consuelo dared no longer refuse; and when she had lighted her lamp and drawn the curtains, seeing him gloomy and lost in thought she threw her arms around him. "How unhappy and disquieted you seem this evening!" said she; "what is passing in your mind?"

"Do you not know, Consuelo? do you not guess?"

"No, on my soul!"

"Swear that you do not guess it. Swear it by the soul of your mother—by your hopes of heaven!"

"Oh, I swear it!"

"And by our love?"

"By our love."

"I believe you, Consuelo, for it would be the first time you ever uttered an untruth!"

"And now will you explain yourself?"

"I shall explain nothing. Perhaps I may have to explain myself soon; and when that moment comes, and when you have too well comprehended me, woe to us both, the day on which you know what I now suffer!"

"O Heaven! What new misfortune threatens us? what curse assails us, as we re-enter this poor chamber, where hitherto we had no secrets from each other? Something too surely told me when I left it this morning that I should return with death in my soul. What have I done that I should not enjoy a day that promised so well? Have I not prayed God sincerely and ardently? Have I not thrust aside each proud thought? Have I not suffered from Clorinda's humiliation? Have I not obtained from the count a promise that he should engage her as *seconda donna* with us? What have I done, must I again ask, to incur the sufferings of which you speak—which I already feel since you feel them?"

"And did you indeed procure an engagement for Clorinda?"

"I am resolved upon it, and the count is a man of his word. This poor girl has always dreamed of the theatre, and has no other means of subsistence."

"And do you think that the count will part with Rosalba, who knows something, for Clorinda, who knows nothing?"

"Rosalba will follow her sister Corilla's fortune; and as to Clorinda we shall give her lessons, and teach her to turn her voice, which is not

amiss, to the best account. The public, besides, will be indulgent to a pretty girl. Were she only to obtain a third place, it would be always something—a beginning—a source of subsistence."

"You are a saint, Consuelo; you do not see that this dolt, in accepting your intervention, although she should be happy in obtaining a third or even a fourth place, will never pardon you for being first."

"What signifies her ingratitude? I know already what ingratitude and the ungrateful are."

"You!" said Anzoleta, bursting into a laugh, as he embraced her with all his old brotherly warmth.

"Oh," replied she, enchanted at having diverted him from his cares, "I should always have before my eyes the image of my noble master Porpora. Many bitter words he uttered which he thought me incapable of comprehending; but they sank deep into my heart, and shall never leave it. He is a man who has suffered greatly, and is devoured by sorrow. From his grief and his deep indignation, as well as what has escaped from him before me, I have learned that artists, my dear Anzoleta, are more wicked and dangerous than I could suppose—that the public is fickle, forgetful, cruel, and unjust—that a great career is but a heavy cross, and that glory is a crown of thorns. Yes, I know all that, and I have thought and reflected upon it so often, that I think I should neither be astonished nor cast down were I to experience it myself. Therefore it is that you have not been able to intoxicate me by the triumph of to-day—therefore it is your dark thoughts have not discouraged me. I do not yet comprehend them very well; but I know that with you, and provided you love me, I shall strive not to hate and despise mankind like my poor unhappy master, that noble yet simple old man.

In listening to his betrothed, Anzoleta recovered his serenity and his courage. She exercised great influence over him, and each day he discovered in her a firmness and rectitude which supplied everything that was wanting in himself. The terrors with which jealousy had inspired him, were forgotten at the end of a quarter of an hour's conversation; and when she questioned him again he was so much ashamed of having suspected a being so pure and so calm, that he ascribed his agitation to other causes. "I am only afraid," said he, "that the count will find you so superior, that he shall judge me unworthy to appear with you before the public. He seemed this evening to have forgotten my very existence. He did not even perceive that in accompanying you I played well. In fine, when he told you of your engagement, he did not say a word of mine. How is it that you did not remark that?"

"It never entered my head that I should be engaged without you. Does he not know that nothing would persuade me to it?—that we are betrothed?—that we love each other? Have you not told him all this?"

"I have told him so, but perhaps he thinks that I wish to boast, Consuelo."

"In that case I shall boast myself of my love, Anzoleta: I shall tell him so that he cannot doubt it. But you are deceived, my friend; the count has not thought it necessary to speak of your engagement because it was a settled thing since the day that you sung so well, at his house."

"But not yet ratified, and your engagement he has told you will be signed to-morrow."

"Do you think I shall sign the first? Oh, no! you have done well to put me on my guard. My name shall be written below yours."

"You swear it?"

"Oh, fie! Do you ask oaths for what you know so well? Truly you do not love me this evening, or you would not make me suffer by seeming to imagine that I did not love you."

At this thought Consuelo's eyes filled with tears, and she sat down with a pouting air, which rendered her charming. I am a fool—an ass! thought Anzoletto. "How could I for one instant suppose that the count could triumph over a soul so pure—an affection so full and entire? He is not so inexperienced as not to perceive at a glance that Consuelo is not for him, and he would not have been so generous as to offer me a place in his gondola, had he not known that he would have played the part of a fool there. No, no; my lot is well assured—my position unassailable. Let Consuelo please him or not, let him love, pay court to her—all that can only advance my fortunes, for she will soon learn to obtain what she wishes without incurring any danger. Consuelo will soon be better informed on this head than myself. She is prudent, she is energetic. The pretensions of the dear count will only turn to my profit and glory."

And thus adjuring all his doubts, he cast himself at the feet of his betrothed, and gave vent to that passionate enthusiasm which he now experienced for the first time, and which his jealousy had served for some hours to restrain.

"O my beauty—my saint—my queen!" he cried "excuse me for having thought of myself before you, as I should have done, on finding myself again with you in this chamber. I left it this morning in anger with you. Yes, yes; I should have re-entered it upon my knees. How could you love and smile upon a brute like me? Strike me with your fan, Consuelo; place your pretty foot upon my neck. You are greater than I am by a hundred fold, and I am your slave forever from this day."

"I do not deserve these fine speeches," said she, abandoning herself to his transports; "and I excuse your doubts, because I comprehend them. It was the fear of being separated from me—of seeing our lot divided—which caused you all this unhappiness. You have failed in your faith in God, which is much worse than having accused me. But I shall pray for you, and say—'Lord, forgive as I forgive him.'"

While thus innocently and simply expressing her love, and mingling with it that Spanish feeling of devotion so full of human affection and ingenuous candor, Consuelo was beautiful. Anzoletto gazed on her with rapture.

"Oh, thou mistress of my soul!" he exclaimed, in a suffocated voice, "be mine for ever more!"

"When you will—to-morrow," said Consuelo, with a heavenly smile.

"To-morrow? and why to-morrow?"

"You are right; it is now past midnight—we may be married to-day. When the sun rises let us seek the priest. We have no friends, and the ceremony need not be long. I have the muslin dress which I have never yet worn. When I made it, dear Anzoletto, I said to myself—'Perhaps I may not have money to purchase my wedding dress, and if my friend should soon decide on marrying me, I would be obliged to wear one that I have had on already.' That, they say,

is unlucky. So, when my mother appeared to me in a dream, to take it from me and lay it aside, she knew what she did, poor soul! Therefore, by to-morrow's sun we shall swear at San Samuel fidelity for ever. Did you wish to satisfy yourself first, wicked one, that I was not ugly?"

"O Consuelo!" exclaimed Anzoletto, with anguish, "you are a child. We could not marry thus, from one day to another, without its being known. The Count and Porpora, whose protection is so necessary to us, would be justly irritated if we took this step without consulting or even informing them. Your old master does not like me too well, and the count, as I know, does not care much for married singers. We cannot go to San Samuel, where everybody knows us, and where the first old woman we met would make the palace acquainted with it in half an hour. We must keep our union secret."

"No, Anzoletto," said Consuelo, "I cannot consent to so rash—so ill-advised a step. I did not think of the objections you have urged to a public marriage; but if they are well founded, they apply with equal force to a private and clandestine one. It was not I who first spoke of it, Anzoletto, although I thought more than once that we were old enough to be married; yet it seemed right to leave the decision to your prudence, and, if I must say it, to your wishes; for I saw very well that you were in no hurry to make me your wife, nor had I any desire to remind you. You have often told me that before settling ourselves, we must think of our future family, and secure the needful resources. My mother said the same, and it is only right. Thus, all things considered, it would be too soon. First, our engagement must be signed—is not that so?—then we must be certain of the good will of the public. We can speak of all this after we make our debut. But why do you grow pale, Anzoletto? Why do you wring your hands? O Heavens! are we not happy? Does it need an oath to insure our mutual love and reliance?"

"O Consuelo! how calm you are!—how pure!—how cold!" exclaimed Anzoletto, with a sort of despair.

"Cold!" exclaimed the young Spaniard, stupefied, and crimsoned with indignation. "God, who reads my heart, knows whether I love you!"

"Very well," retorted Anzoletto, angrily; "throw yourself into his bosom, for mine is no safe refuge; and I shall fly lest I become impious."

Thus saying he rushed towards the door, believing that Consuelo, who had hitherto never been able to separate from him in any quarrel however trifling, would hasten to prevent him; and in fact she made an impetuous movement as if to spring after him, then stopped, saw him go out, ran likewise to the door, and put her hand on the latch in order to call him back. But summoning up all her resolution by a superhuman effort, she fastened the bolt behind him, and then, overcome by the violent struggle she had undergone, ~~she~~ swooned away upon the floor, where she remained motionless till daybreak.

CHAPTER XIV.

"I MUST confess that I am completely enchanted with her," said Count Zustiniani to his friend Barberigo, as they conversed together on the balcony of his palace about two o'clock the same night.

"That is as much as to say that I must not be so," replied the young and brilliant Barberigo, "and I yield the point, for your rights take precedence of mine. Nevertheless, if Corilla should mesh you afresh in her nets, you will have the goodness to let me know, that I may try and win her ear."

"Do not think of it, if you love me. Corilla has never been other than a plaything. I see by your countenance that you are but mocking me."

"No, but I think that the amusement is somewhat serious which causes us to commit such follies and incur such expense."

"I admit that I pursue my pleasures with so much ardor that I spare no expense to prolong them; but in this case it is more than fancy—it is passion which I feel. I never saw a creature so strangely beautiful as this Consuelo; she is like a lamp that pales from time to time, but which at the moment when it is apparently about to expire, sheds so bright a light that the very stars are eclipsed."

"Ah!" said Barberigo, sighing, "that little black dress and white collar, that slender and half devout toilet, that pale, calm face, at first so little striking, that frank address and astonishing absence of coquetry—all become transformed, and, as it were, grow divine when inspired by her own lofty genius of song. Happy Zustiniani, who hold in your hands the destinies of this dawning star!"

"Would I were secure of the happiness which you envy! But I am discouraged when I find none of those passions with which I am acquainted, and which are so easy to bring into play. Imagine, friend, that this girl remains an enigma to me even after a whole day's study of her. It would almost seem from her tranquillity and my awkwardness, that I am already so far gone that I cannot see clearly."

"Truly you are captivated, since you already grow blind. I, whom hope does not confuse, can tell you in three words what you do not understand. Consuelo is the flower of innocence; she loves the little Anzoletto, and will love him yet for some time; but if you affront this attachment of childhood, you will only give it fresh strength. Appear to consider it of no importance, and the comparison which she will not fail to make between you and him will not fail to cool her preference."

"But the rascal is as handsome as an Apollo, he has a magnificent voice, and must succeed. Corilla is already crazy about him; he is not one to be despised by a girl who has eyes."

"But he is poor, and you are rich—he is unknown, and you are powerful. The needful thing is to find out whether they are merely betrothed, or whether a more intimate connexion binds them. In the latter case Consuelo's eyes will soon be opened; in the former there will be a struggle and uncertainty which will but prolong her anguish."

"I must then desire what I horribly fear, and which maddens me with rage when I think of it. What do you suppose?"

"I think they are merely betrothed."

"But it is impossible. He is a bold and ardent youth, and then the manners of those people!"

"Consuelo is in all respects a prodigy. You have had experience to little purpose, dear Zustiniani, if you do not see in all the movements, all the looks, all the words of this girl, that she is pure as the ocean gem."

"You transport me with joy."

"Take care—it is folly, prejudice. If you love Consuelo, she must be married to-morrow, so that in eight days her master may make her feel the weight of her chain, the torments of jealousy, the *ennui* of a troublesome, unjust, and faithless guardian; for the handsome Anzoletto will be all that. I could not observe him yesterday between Consuelo and Clorinda without being able to prophesy her wrongs and misfortunes. Follow my advice, and you will thank me. The bond of marriage is easy to unloose between people of that condition, and you know that with women love is an ardent fancy which only increases with obstacles."

"You drive me to despair," replied the count; "nevertheless, I feel that you are right."

Unhappily for the designs of Count Zustiniani, this dialogue had a listener upon whom they did not reckon, and who did not lose one syllable of it. After quitting Consuelo, Anzoletto, stung with jealousy had come to prowl about the palace of his protector, in order to assure himself that the count did not intend one of those forcible abductions then so much in vogue, and for which the patricians had almost entire impunity. He could hear no more, for the moon, which just then arose over the roofs of the palace, began to cast his shadow on the pavement, and the two young lords, perceiving that a man was under the balcony, withdrew and closed the window.

Anzoletto disappeared in order to ponder at his leisure on what he had just heard; it was quite enough to direct him what course to take in order to profit by the virtuous counsels of Barberigo to his friend. He slept scarcely two hours, and immediately when he awoke ran to the Corte Minelli. The door was still locked, but through the chinks he could see Consuelo, dressed, stretched on the bed and sleeping, pale and motionless as death. The coolness of the morning had roused her from her swoon, and she threw herself on the bed without having strength to undress. He stood for some moments looking at her with remorseful disquietude, but at last becoming uneasy at this heavy sleep, so contrary to the active habits of his betrothed, he gently enlarged an opening through which he could pass his knife and slide back the bolt. This occasioned some noise: but Consuelo, overcome with fatigue, was not awakened. He then entered, knelt down beside her couch, and remained thus until she awoke. On finding him there, Consuelo uttered a cry of joy, but instantly taking away her arms, which she had thrown round his neck, she drew back with an expression of alarm.

"You dread me now, and instead of embracing, fly me," said he with grief. "Oh, I am cruelly punished for my fault; pardon me, Consuelo, and see if you have ever cause to mistrust your friend again. I have watched you sleeping for a whole hour; pardon me, sister—it is the first and last time you shall have to blame or repulse your brother; I shall never more offend you by my jealousies or passions. Leave me, banish me if I fail in my oath. Are you satisfied, dear and good Consuelo?"

Consuelo only replied by pressing the fair head of the Venetian to her heart, and bathing it with tears. This outburst comforted her; and soon after falling back on her pillow, "I confess," said she, "that I am overcome; I hardly slept all night, we parted so unhappily."

"Sleep, Consuelo; sleep, dear angel," replied Anzoletto. "Do you remember the night that you allowed me to sleep on your couch, while you worked and prayed at your little table? It is now my turn to watch and protect you.—Sleep, my child: I shall turn over your music and read it to myself whilst you repose an hour or two; no one will disturb us before the evening. Sleep, then, and prove by this confidence that you pardon and trust me."

Consuelo replied by a heavenly smile. He kissed her forehead and placed himself at the table, while she enjoyed a refreshing sleep, mingled with sweet dreams.

Anzoletto had lived calmly and innocently too long with this young girl to render it difficult after one day's agitation, to regain his usual demeanor. This brotherly feeling was, as it were, the ordinary condition of his soul; besides, what he had heard the preceding night under the balcony of Zustiniani, was well calculated to strengthen his faltering purpose. "Thanks, my brave gentlemen," said he to himself; "you have given me a lesson which the *rascal* will turn to account just as much as one of your own class. I shall abstain from jealousy, infidelity, or any weakness which may give you an advantage over me. Illustrious and profound Barberigo! your prophecies bring counsel; it is good to be of your school."

Thus reflecting, Anzoletto, overcome by a sleepless night, dozed in his turn, his head supported on his hand, and his elbows on the table; but his sleep was not sound, and the daylight had begun to decline as he rose to see if Consuelo still slumbered. The rays of the setting sun streaming through the window, cast a glorious purple tinge on the old bed and its beautiful occupant. Her white mantilla she had made into a curtain, which was secured to a flagree crucifix nailed to the wall above her head. Her veil fell gracefully over her well-proportioned and admirable figure; and, bathed in this rose-colored light as a flower which closes its leaves together at the approach of evening, her long tresses falling upon her white shoulders, her hands crossed on her bosom as a saint on her marble tomb, she looked so chaste and heavenly that Anzoletto mentally exclaimed, "Ah, Count Zustiniani, that you could see her this moment, and behold the prudent and jealous guardian of a treasure you vainly covet, beside her!"

At this moment, a faint noise was heard outside, and Anzoletto, whose faculties were kept on the stretch, thought he recognised the splashing of water at the foot of Consuelo's ruined dwelling, although gondolas rarely approached the Corte Minelli. He mounted on a chair, and was by this means able to see through a sort of loop-hole near the ceiling, which looked towards the canal. He distinctly saw Count Zustiniani leave his bark, and question the half-naked children who played on the beach. He was uncertain whether he should awaken his betrothed or close the door; but, during the ten minutes which the count occupied in finding out the garret of Consuelo, he had time to regain the utmost self-possession and to leave the door ajar, so that any one might enter without noise or hindrance, then reseating himself, he took a pen and pretended to write music. He appeared perfectly calm and tranquil, although his heart beat vio-

The count slipped in, rejoicing in the idea of surprising his protégée whose obvious destitution he conceived would favor his corrupt intentions. He brought Consuelo's engagement ready signed along with him, and he thought with such a passport his reception could not be very discouraging; but at the first sight of the strange sanctuary in which this sweet girl slept her angelic sleep under the watchful eye of her contented lover, Count Zustiniani lost his presence of mind, entangled his cloak which he had thrown with a conquering air over his shoulders, and stopped between the bed and the table, utterly uncertain whom he should address. Anzoletto was revenged for the scene at the entrance of the gondola.

"My lord," he exclaimed, rising, as if surprised by an unexpected visit, "shall I awake my betrothed?"

"No," replied the count, already at his ease, and affecting to turn his back that he might contemplate Consuelo; "I am so happy to see her thus, I forbid you to awaken her."

"Yes, you may look at her," thought Anzoletto; "it is all I wished for."

Consuelo did not awaken, and the count, speaking in a low tone and assuming a gracious and tranquil aspect, expressed his admiration without restraint. "You were right, Zoto," said he with an easy air; "Consuelo is the first singer in Italy, and I was wrong to doubt that she was the most beautiful woman in the world."

"Your highness thought her frightful, however," said Anzoletto, maliciously.

"You have doubtless complained to her of all my folly; but I reserve to myself the pleasure of obtaining pardon by so honorable and complete an apology, that you shall not again be able to injure me in recalling my errors."

"Injure you, Signor Count!—how could I do so even had I the wish?"

Consuelo moved. "Let us not awaken her too suddenly," said the count, and clear this table, that I may place on it and read, her engagement. Hold!" said he when Anzoletto had obeyed him; "cast your eyes over this paper, while we wait for hers to open."

"An engagement before trial!—it is magnificent, my noble patron. And she is to appear at once, before Corilla's engagement has expired?"

"That is nothing; there is some trifling debt of a thousand sequins or so due her, which we shall pay off."

"But what if Corilla should rebel!"

"We will confine her under the leads."

"Fore Heaven! nothing stops your highness."

"Yes, Zoto" replied the count coldly; "thus it is: what we desire we do, towards one and all."

"And the conditions are the same as for Corilla—the same conditions for a debutante without name or reputation, as for an illustrious performer adored by the public."

"The new singer shall have even more; and if the conditions granted her predecessor do not satisfy her, she has only to say a word and they shall be doubled. Everything depends upon herself," continued he, raising his voice a little, as he perceived that Consuelo was awake: "her fate is in her own hands."

Consuelo had heard all this partially, through her sleep. When she had rubbed her eyes, and assured herself that she was not dreaming,

she slid down into the space between the bed and the wall, without considering the strangeness of her position, and after arranging her hair, came forward with ingenuous confidence to join in the conversation.

"Signor Count," said she, "you are only too good; but I am not so presumptuous as to avail myself of your offer. I will not sign this engagement until I have made a trial of my powers before the public. It would not be delicate on my part. I might not please—I might incur a *flasco* and be hissed. Even should I be hoarse or unprepared, or even ugly that day, your word would still be pledged—you would be too proud to take it back, and I to avail myself of it."

"Ugly on that day, Consuelo—you ugly!" said the count, looking at her with burning glances; "come now," he added, taking her by the hand and leading her to the mirror, "look at yourself there. If you are adorable in this costume, what would you be, covered with diamonds and radiant with triumph?"

The count's impertinence made Anzoleto gnash his teeth; but the calm indifference with which Consuelo received his compliments restrained his impatience. "Sir," said she, pushing back the fragment of a looking-glass which he held in his hand, "do not break my mirror; it is the only one I ever had, and it has never deceived me.—Ugly or pretty, I refuse your liberality; and I may tell you frankly that I shall not appear unless my betrothed be similarly engaged. I will have no other theatre nor any other public except his; we cannot be separate, being engaged to each other."

This abrupt declaration took the count a little unawares, but he soon regained his equanimity.

"You are right, Consuelo," replied he; "I never intended to separate you: Zoto shall appear with yourself. At the same time I cannot conceal from you that his talents, although remarkable, are much inferior to yours."

"I do not believe it, my lord," said Consuelo, blushing as if she had received a personal insult.

"I hear that he is your pupil, much more than that of the maestro I gave him. Do not deny it, beautiful Consuelo. On learning your intimacy, Porpora exclaimed, 'I am no longer astonished at certain qualities he possesses, which I was unable to reconcile with his defects.'"

"Thanks to the Signor Professor," said Anzoleto, with a forced smile.

"He will change his mind," said Consuelo, gaily—"besides, the public will contradict this dear good master."

"The dear good master is the best judge of music in the world," replied the count. "Anzoleto will do well to profit by your lessons; but we cannot arrange the terms of his agreement before we have ascertained the sentiments of the public. Let him make his appearance, and we shall settle with him according to justice and our own favorable feeling towards him, on which he has every reason to rely."

"Then let us both make our appearance," replied Consuelo: "but no signature—no agreement before trial; on that I am determined."

"You are not satisfied with my terms, Consuelo; very well, then you shall dictate them yourself; here is the pen—add—take away—my signature is below."

Consuelo seized the pen; Anzoleto turned pale, and the count, who observed him, chewed with pleasure the end of the ruffle which he

twisted in his fingers. Consuelo erased the contract, and wrote upon the portion remaining above the signature of the count—

"Anzoletto and Consuelo severally agree to such conditions as it shall please Count Zustiniani to impose, after their first appearance which shall take place during the ensuing month at the theatre of San Samuel."

She signed rapidly, and passed the pen to her lover.

"Sign without looking," said she. "You can do no less to prove your gratitude, and your confidence in your benefactor."

Anzoletto had glanced over it in a twinkling; he signed—it was but the work of a moment.—The count read over his shoulder.

"Consuelo," said he, "you are a strange girl—in truth an admirable creature. You will both dine with me," he continued, tearing the contract and offering his hand to Consuelo, who accepted it, but at the same time requested him to wait with Anzoletto in his gondola while she should arrange her toilet.

"Decidedly," said she to herself when alone, "I shall be able to buy a new marriage robe." She then arranged her muslin dress, settled her hair, and flew down the stairs singing with a voice full of freshness and vigor. The count, with excess of courtesy, had waited for her with Anzoletto at the foot of the stair. She believed him further off, and almost fell into his arms, but suddenly disengaging herself, she took his hand and carried it to her lips, after the fashion of the country, with the respect of an inferior who does not wish to infringe upon the distinctions of rank; then turning she clasped her betrothed, and bounded with joyous steps towards the gondola, without awaiting the ceremonious escort of her somewhat mortified protector.

CHAPTER XV.

THE count seeing that Consuelo was insensible to the stimulus of gain, tried to flatter her vanity by offering her jewels and ornaments; but these she refused. Zustiniani at first imagined that she was aware of his secret intentions; but he soon saw that it was but a species of rustic pride, and that she would receive no recompense until she had earned it by working for the prosperity of his theatre. He obliged her however to accept a white satin dress, observing that she could not appear with propriety in her muslin robe in his saloon, and adding that he would consider it a favor if she would abandon the attire of the people. She submitted her fine figure to the fashionable milliners, who made the very most of it, and did not spare the material. Thus transformed in two days into a woman of the world, and induced to accept a necklace of fine pearls which the count presented to her as payment for the evening when she sang before him and his friends, she was beautiful, if not according to her own peculiar style of beauty, at least as she should be admired by the vulgar. This result however was not perfectly attained. At the first glance Consuelo neither struck nor dazzled anybody; she was always pale, and her modest, studious habits took from her look that brilliant glance which we witness in the eyes of women whose only object is to shine. The basis of her character, as well as the distinguishing

peculiarity of her countenance, was a reflective seriousness.—One might see her eat, and talk, and weary herself with the trivial concerns of daily life, without even supposing that she was pretty; but once the smile of enjoyment, so easily allied to serenity of soul, came to light up her features, how charming she became! And when she was further animated—when she interested herself seriously in the business of the piece—when she displayed tenderness, exaltation of mind, the manifestation of her inward life and hidden power—she shone resplendent with all the fire of genius and love, she was another being, the audience were hurried away—passion-stricken as it were—annihilated at pleasure—without her being able to explain the mystery of her power.

What the count experienced for her therefore astonished and annoyed him strangely. There were in this man of the world artistic chords which had never yet been struck, and which she caused to thrill with unknown emotions; but this revelation could not penetrate a patrician's soul sufficiently to enable him to discern the impotence and poverty of the means by which he attempted to lead away a woman so different from those he had hitherto endeavored to corrupt.

He took patience and determined to try the effects of emulation. He conducted her to his box in the theatre that she might witness Corilla's success, and that ambition might be awakened in her; but the result was quite different from that which he expected from it. Consuelo left the theatre, cold, silent, fatigued, and in no way excited by the noise and applause. Corilla was deficient in solid talent, noble sentiment, and well-founded power: and Consuelo felt quite competent to form an opinion of this forced, factitious talent, already vitiated at its source by selfishness and excess. She applauded unconsciously, uttered words of formal approval, and disdained to put on a mask of enthusiasm for one whom she could neither fear nor admire. The count for a moment thought her under the influence of secret jealousy of the talents, or at least of the person, of the prima donna. "This is nothing," said he, "to the triumphs you will achieve when you appear before the public as you have already appeared before me. I hope that you are not frightened by what you see."

"No, Signor Count," replied Consuelo, smiling; "the public frightens me not, for I never think of it. I only think of what might be realized in the part which Corilla fills in so brilliant a manner, but in which there are many defects which she does not perceive."

"What! you do not think of the public?"

"No; I think of the piece, of the intentions of the composer, of the spirit of the part, and of the good qualities and defects of the orchestra, from the former of which we are to derive advantage, while we are to conceal the latter by a louder intonation at certain parts. I listen to the choruses, which are not always satisfactory, and require a more strict direction; I examine the passages on which all one's strength is required, and also those of course where it may advantageously be reserved. You will perceive, Signor Count, that I have many things to think of besides the public, who know nothing about all that I have mentioned, and can teach me nothing."

This grave judgment and serious inquiry so surprised Zustiniani that he could not utter a single question, and asked himself, with some trepidation, what hold a gallant like himself could have on genius of this stamp.

The appearance of the two debutants was preceded by all the usual

inflated announcements; and this was the source of continual discussion and difference of opinion between the count and Porpora, Consuelo and her lover. The old master and his pupil blamed the quack announcements and all these thousand unworthy tricks which have driven us so far into folly and bad faith. In Venice during those days the journals had not much to say as to public affairs; they did not concern themselves with the composition of the audience; they were unaware of the deep resources of public advertisements, the gossip of biographical announcements, and the powerful machinery of hired applause. There was plenty of bribing and not a few cabals, but all this was concocted in coteries, and brought about through the instrumentality of the public, warmly attached to one side or sincerely hostile to the other. Art was not always the moving spring; passions great and small, foreign alike to art and talent, then as now, came to do battle in the temple; but they were not so skilful in concealing these sources of discord, and in laying them to the account of pure love for art. At bottom, indeed, it was the same vulgar, worldly spirit, with a surface less complicated by civilization.

Zustiniani managed these affairs more as a nobleman than the conductor of a theatre. His ostentation was a more powerful impulse than the avarice of ordinary speculators. He prepared the public in his saloons, and warmed up his representations beforehand. It is true his conduct was never cowardly or mean, but it bore the puerile stamp of self-love, a busy gallantry, and the pointed gossip of good society. He therefore proceeded to demolish, piece by piece, with considerable art, the edifice so lately raised by his own hands to the glory of Corilla. Everybody saw that he wanted to set up in its place the miracle of talent; and as the exclusive possession of this wonderful phenomenon was ascribed to him, poor Consuelo never suspected the nature of his intentions towards her, although all Venice knew that the count, disgusted with the conduct of Corilla, was about to introduce in her place another singer; while many added, "Grand mystification for the public, and great prejudice to the theatre; for his favorite is a little street singer, who has nothing to recommend her except her fine voice and tolerable figure."

Hence arose fresh cabals for Corilla, who went about playing the part of an injured rival, and who implored her extensive circle of adorers and their friends to do justice to the insolent pretensions of the *zingarella*. Hence also new cabals in favor of Consuelo, by a numerous party, who, although differing widely on other subjects, united in a wish to mortify Corilla and elevate her rival in her place.

As to the veritable dilettanti of music, they were equally divided between the opinion of the serious masters—such as Porpora, Marcello, and Jomelli, who predicted with the appearance of an excellent musician, the return of the good old usages and casts of performance—and the anger of second-rate composers, whose compositions Corilla had always preferred, and who now saw themselves threatened with neglect in her person. The orchestra, dreading to set to work on scores which had been long laid aside, and which consequently would require study, all those retainers of the theatre, who in every thorough reform always foresaw an entire change of the performers, even the very scene-shifters, the tirewoman, and the hair-dressers—all were in movement for or against the *débutante* at San Samuel. In point of fact the debut was much more in everybody's thoughts than the new administration or the acts of the Doge, Pietro, Grimaldi, who had just then peaceably succeeded his predecessor, Luigi Pisani.

Consuelo was exceedingly distressed at these delays and the petty quarrels connected with her new career; she would have wished to come out at once, without any other preparation than what concerned herself and the study of the new piece. She understood nothing of those endless intrigues which seemed to her more dangerous than useful, and which she felt she could very well dispense with. But the count, who saw more clearly into the secrets of his profession, and who wished to be envied his imaginary happiness, spared nothing to secure partisans, and made her come every day to his palace to be presented to all the aristocracy of Venice. Consuelo's modesty and reluctance ill supported his designs; but he induced her to sing, and the victory was at once decisive—brilliant—incontestible.

Anzoleto was far from sharing the repugnance of his betrothed for these secondary means. His success was by no means so certain as hers. In the first place, the count was not so ardent in his favor, and the tenor whom he was to succeed was a man of talent, who would not be easily forgotten. It is true he also sang nightly at the count's palace, and Consuelo in their duets brought him out admirably; so that, urged and sustained by the magic of a genius superior to his own, he often attained great heights. He was on these occasions both encouraged and applauded; but when the first surprise excited by his fine voice was over, more especially when Consuelo had revealed herself, his deficiency was apparent, and frightened even himself. This was the time to work with renewed vigor; but in vain Consuelo exhorted him, and appointed him to meet her each morning at the Corte Minelli—where she persisted in remaining, spite of the remonstrances of the count, who wished to establish her more suitably. Anzoleto had so much to do—so many visits, engagements, and intrigues on hand—such distracting anxieties to occupy his mind—that neither time nor courage was left for study.

In the midst of these perplexities, seeing that the greatest opposition would be given by Corilla, and also that the count no longer gave himself any trouble about her, Anzoleto resolved to visit her himself in order to deprecate her hostility. As may easily be conceived, she had pretended to take the matter very lightly, and treated the neglect and contempt of Zustiniani with philosophical unconcern. She mentioned and boasted everywhere that she had received brilliant offers from the Italian opera at Paris, and calculating on the reverse which she thought awaited her arrival, laughed outright at the illusions of the count, and his party. Anzoleto thought that with prudence and by employing a little deceit, he might disarm this formidable enemy; and having perfumed and adorned himself, he waited on her at one in the afternoon—an hour when the siesta renders visits unusual and the palaces silent.

CHAPTER XVI.

ANZOLETO found Corilla alone in a charming boudoir, reclining on a couch in a becoming undress; but the alterations in her features by daylight led him to suspect that her security with regard to Consuelo was not so great as her faithful partisans asserted. Nevertheless, she

received him with an easy air, and tapping him playfully on the cheek, while she made a sign to her servant to withdraw, exclaimed—"Ah, wicked one, is it you?—are you come with your tales, or would you make me believe you are no dealer in flourishes, nor the most intriguing of all the postulants for fame? You were somewhat conceited, my handsome friend, if you supposed that I should be disheartened by your sudden flight after so many tender declarations; and still more conceited was it to suppose that you were wanted, for in four-and-twenty hours I had forgotten that such a person existed."

"Four-and-twenty hours!—that is a long time," replied Anzoletto, kissing the plump and rounded arm of Corilla. "Ah, if I believed that, I should be proud indeed; but I know that if I was so far deceived as to believe you when you said—"

"What I said, I advise you to forget also. Had you called, you would have found my door shut against you. What assurance to come to-day!"

"Is it not good taste to leave those who are in favor, and to lay one's heart and devotion at the feet of her who—"

"Well, finish—to her who is in disgrace. It is most generous and humane on your part, most illustrious friend!" And Corilla fell back upon the satin pillow with a burst of shrill and forced laughter.

Although the disgraced prima donna was no longer in her early freshness—although the mid-day sun was not much in her favor, and although vexation had somewhat taken from the effect of her full-formed features—Anzoletto, who had never been on terms of intimacy with a woman so brilliant and so renowned, felt himself moved in regions of the soul to which Consuelo had never descended, and whence he had voluntarily banished her pure image. He therefore palliated the raillery of Corilla by a profession of love which he had only intended to feign, but which he now actually began to experience. I say love, for want of a better word, for it were to profane the name to apply it to the attraction awakened by such women as Corilla. When she saw the young tenor really moved, she grew milder, and addressed him after a more amiable fashion.

"I confess," said she, "you selected me for a whole evening, but I did not altogether esteem you. I know you are ambitious, and consequently false, and ready for every treason. I dare not trust to you. You pretended to be jealous on a certain night in my gondola, and took upon you the airs of a despot. That might have disenchanted me with the inspired gallantries of our patricians, but you deceived me, ungrateful one! you were engaged to another, and are going to marry—whom?—oh, I know very well—my rival, my enemy, the debutante, the new protégée of Zustiniani. Shame upon us two—upon us three—upon us all!" added she, growing animated in spite of herself, and withdrawing her hand from Anzoletto.

"Cruel creature!" he exclaimed, trying to regain her fair fingers, 'you ought to understand what passed in my heart when I first saw you, and not busy yourself with what occupied me before that terrible moment. As to what happened since, can you not guess it, and is there any necessity to recur to the subject?"

"I am not to be put off with half words and reservations; do you love the *zincarella*, and are you about to marry her?"

"And if I loved her, how does it happen I did not marry her before?"

"Perhaps the count would have opposed it. Every one knows what

he wants now. They even say that he has ground for impatience, and the little one still more so."

The color mounted to Anzoleto's face when he heard language of this sort applied to the being whom he venerated above all others.

"Ah, you are angry at my supposition," said Corilla; "it is well—that is what I wished to find out. You love her. When will the marriage take place?"

"For the love of Heaven, madam, let us speak of nobody except ourselves."

"Agreed," replied Corilla. "So, my former lover and your future spouse——"

Anzoleto was enraged; he rose to go away; but what was he to do? Should he enrage still more the woman whom he had come to pacify? He remained undecided, dreadfully humiliated, and unhappy at the part he had imposed upon himself.

Corilla eagerly desired to win his affections, not because she loved him, but because she wished to be revenged on Consuelo, whom she had abused without being certain that her insinuations were well founded.

"You see," said she, arresting him on the threshold with a penetrating look, "that I have reason to doubt you; for at this moment you are deceiving some one—either her or myself."

"Neither one nor the other," replied he, endeavoring to justify himself in his own eyes. "I am not her lover, and I never was so. I am not in love with her, for I am not jealous of the count."

"Oh! indeed? You are jealous, even to the point of denying it, and you come here to cure yourself or to distract your attention from a subject so unpleasant. Many thanks!"

"I am not jealous, I repeat; and to prove that it is not mortification which makes me speak, I tell you that the count is no more her lover than I am; that she is virtuous, child as she is, and that the only one guilty towards you is Count Zustiniani."

"So, so; then I may hiss the *zingarella* without afflicting you. You shall be in my box on the night of her debut, and you shall hiss her. Your obedience shall be the price of my favor—take me at my word, or I draw back."

"Alas! madam, you wish to prevent me appearing myself, for you know I am to do so at the same time as Consuelo. If you hiss her, I shall fall a victim to your wrath, because I shall sing with her. And what have I done, wretch that I am, to displease you? Alas! I had a delicious but fatal dream. I thought for a whole evening that you took an interest in me, and that I should grow great under your protection. Now I am the object of your hatred and anger—I, who have so loved and respected you as to fly you! Very well, madam; satiate your enmity. Overthrow me—ruin me—close my career. So that you can here tell me, in secret, that I am not hateful to you, shall I accept the public marks of your anger?"

"Serpent!" exclaimed Corilla, "where have you imbibed the poison which your tongue and your eyes distil?—Much would I give to know, to comprehend you, for you are the most amiable of lovers and the most dangerous of enemies."

"I your enemy! how could I be so, even were I not subdued by your charms? Have you enemies then, divine Corilla? Can you have them in Venice, where you are known, and where you rule over no divided empire? A lover quarrel throws the count into despair: he

would remove you, since thereby he would cease to suffer. He meets a little creature in his path who appears to display resources, and who only asks to be heard. Is this a crime on the part of a poor child who only hears your name with terror, and who never utters it herself without respect? And you ascribe to this little one insolent pretensions which she does not entertain. The efforts of the count to recommend her to his friends, the kindness of these friends, who exaggerate her deserts, the bitterness of yours, who spread calumnies which serve but to annoy and vex you, whilst they should but calm your soul in picturing to you your glory unassailable, and your rival all trembling—these are the prejudices which I discover in you, and at which I am so confounded that I hardly know how to assail them."

"You know but too well, with that flattering tongue of yours," said Corilla, looking at him with tenderness mixed with distrust; "I hear the honied words which reason bids me disclaim. I wager that this Consuelo is divinely beautiful, whatever may have been said to the contrary, and that she has merits, though opposed to mine, since the severe Porpora has proclaimed them."

"You know Porpora; you know all his crotchety ideas. An enemy of all originality in others, and of every innovation in the art of song, he declares a little pupil, who listens to his dotage, submissive to his pedantry, and who runs over the scale decently, to be preferable to all the wonders which the public adores. How long have you tormented yourself about this crazy old fool?"

"Has she no talent, then?"

"She has a good voice, and sings church music fairly, but she can know nothing about the stage; and as to the power of displaying what talent she has, she is so overcome with alarm, that there is much reason to fear that she will lose what little Heaven has given her."

"Afraid!—what, she? I have heard say, on the other hand, that she is endowed with a fair stock of impudence?"

"Ah, the poor girl! Alas! some one must have a great spite at her. You shall hear her, divine Corilla, and you will be touched with sympathising pity, and will applaud her rather than have her hissed, as you said for her just now."

"Either you are cheating me, or my friends have cheated strangely concerning her."

"They have cheated themselves. In their absurd and useless ardor for you they have got frightened at seeing a rival raised up to you. Frightened at a mere child!—and frightened for you! Ah, how little can they know you! Oh, were I your permitted friend, I should know better what you are, than to think that I was doing you aught but injury in holding up any rivalry as a fear to you, were it that of a Faustina or a Molteni."

"Don't imagine that I have been frightened. I am neither envious nor ill-natured, and I should feel no regret at the success of any one who had never injured my own. But when I have cause to believe that people are injuring and braving me, then indeed—"

"Will you let me bring little Consuelo to your feet? Had she dared it, she would have come to ask your aid and advice. But she is a mere shy child. And you, too, have been calumniated to her. She has been told that you are cruel, revengeful and bent on causing her fall."

"She has been told so? Ah, then I understand what brought you hither."

"You understand nothing of the sort, madam. For I did not believe at all, and never shall believe it. You have not an idea what brought me."

And as he spoke, Anzoletto turned his sparkling eyes upon Corilla, and bent his knee before her with the deepest show of reverence and love.

Corilla was destitute neither of acuteness nor of ill-nature; but as happens to women excessively taken with themselves, vanity sealed her eyes and precipitated her into the clumsy trap.

She thought she had nothing to apprehend as regarded Anzoletto's sentiments for the debutante. When he justified himself, and swore by all the gods that he had never loved this young girl, save as a brother should love, he told the truth, and there was so much confidence in his manner that Corilla's jealousy was overcome. At length the great day approached, and the cabal was annihilated. Corilla, on her part, thenceforth went on in a different direction, fully persuaded that the timid and inexperienced Consuelo would not succeed, and that Anzoletto would owe her an infinite obligation for having contributed nothing to her downfall. Besides, he had the address to embroil her with her firmest champions, pretending to be jealous, and obliging her to dismiss them rather rudely.

Whilst he thus labored in secret to blast the hopes of a woman whom he pretended to love, the cunning Venetian played another game with the count and Consuelo. He boasted to them of having disarmed this most formidable enemy by dexterous management, interested visits, and bold falsehoods. The count, frivolous and somewhat of a gossip, was extremely amused by the stories of his protégé. His self-love was flattered at the regret which Corilla was said to experience on account of their quarrel, and he urged on this young man, with the levity which one witnesses in affairs of love and gallantry, to the commission of cowardly perfidy. Consuelo was astonished and distressed. "You would do better," said she, "to exercise your voice and study your part. You think you have done much in propitiating the enemy, but a single false note, a movement badly expressed, would do more against you with the impartial public than the silence of the envious. It is of this public that you should think, and I see with pain that you are thinking nothing about it."

"Be calm, little Consuelo," said he; "your error is to believe a public at once impartial and enlightened. Those best acquainted with the matter are hardly ever in earnest, and those who are in earnest know so little about it, that it only requires boldness to dazzle and lead them away."

CHAPTER XVII.

IN the midst of the anxieties awakened by the desire of success, and by the ardor of Corilla, the jealousy of Anzoletto with regard to the count slumbered. Happily, Consuelo did not need a more watchful or more moral protector. Secure in innocence she avoided the advances of Zustiniani, and kept him at a distance precisely by caring nothing about it. At the end of a fortnight this Venetian libertine acknowledged that she had none of those worldly passions which

led to corruption, though he spared no pains to make them spring up. But even in this respect he had advanced no further than the first day, and he feared to ruin his hopes by pressing them too openly. Had Anzoletto annoyed him by keeping watch, anger might have caused him to precipitate matters; but Anzoletto left him at perfect liberty. Consuelo distrusted nothing, and he only tried to make himself agreeable, hoping in time to become necessary to her. There was no sort of delicate attentions, or refined gallantries, that he omitted. Consuelo placed them all to the account of the liberal and elegant manners of his class, united with a love for art and a natural goodness of disposition. She displayed towards him an unfeigned regard, a sacred gratitude, while he, happy and yet dissatisfied with this pure-hearted unreserve, began to grow uneasy at the sentiment which he inspired until such period as he might wish to break the ice.

While he gave himself up with fear, and yet not without satisfaction, to this new feeling—consoling himself a little for his want of success by the opinion which all Venice entertained of his triumph—Corilla experienced the same transformation in herself. She loved with ardor, if not with devotion; and her irritable and imperious soul bent beneath the yoke of her young Adonis. It was truly the queen of beauty in love with the beautiful hunter, and for the first time humble and timid before the mortal of her choice. She affected with a sort of delight, virtues which she did not possess. So true it is that the extinction of self-idolatry in favor of another, tends to raise and ennoble, were it but for an instant, hearts the least susceptible of pure emotions.

The emotion which she experienced reacted on her talents, and it was remarked at the theatre that she performed pathetic parts more naturally and with greater sensibility. But as her character and the essence of her nature were thus as it seemed inverted; as it required a sort of internal convulsion to effect this change, her bodily strength gave way in the combat, and each day they observed—some with malicious joy, others with serious alarm—the failure of her powers. Her brilliant execution was impeded by shortness of breath and false intonations. The annoyance and terror which she experienced, weakened her still further, and at the representation which took place previous to the debut of Consuelo, she sang so false, and failed in so many brilliant passages, that her friends applauded faintly, and were soon reduced to silence and consternation by the murmurs of her opponents.

At length the great day arrived: the house was filled to suffocation. Corilla, attired in black, pale, agitated, more dead than alive, divided between the fear of seeing her lover condemned and her rival triumph, was seated in the recess of her little box in the theatre. Crowds of the aristocracy and beauty of Venice, tier above tier, made a brilliant display. The fops were crowded behind the scenes, and even in the front of the stage. The lady of the Doge took her place along with the great dignitaries of the republic. Porpora directed the orchestra in person; and Count Zustiniani waited at the door of Consuelo's apartment till she had concluded her toilet, while Anzoletto, dressed as an antique warrior, with all the absurd and lavish ornaments of the age, retired behind the scenes to swallow a draught of Cyprus wine, in order to restore his courage.

The opera was neither of the classic period nor yet the work of an

Innovator. It was the unknown production of a stranger. To escape the cabals which his own name or that of any other celebrated person would have caused, Porpora, above all things anxious for the success of his pupil, had brought forward *Ipermnestra*, the lyrical production of a young German, who had enemies neither in Italy nor elsewhere, and who was styled simply Christopher Gluck.

When Anzoletto appeared on the stage a murmur of admiration burst forth. The tenor to whom he succeeded—an admirable singer, who had had the imprudence to continue on the boards till his voice became thin and age had changed his looks—was little regretted by an ungrateful public; and the fair sex, who listen oftener with their eyes than with their ears, were delighted to find, in the place of a fat, elderly man, a fine youth of twenty-four, fresh as a rose, fair as Phœbus, and formed as if Phidias himself had been the artist—a true son of the lagunes, *Bianco crespò, e grassotto*.

He was too much agitated to sing his first air well, but his magnificent voice, his graceful attitudes, and some happy turns, sufficed to propitiate the audience and satisfy the ladies. The débutant had great resources; he was applauded threefold, and twice brought back before the scenes, according to the custom of Italy, and of Venice in particular.

Success gave him courage, and, when he reappeared with *Ipermnestra*, he was no longer afraid. But all the effect of this scene was for Consuelo. They only saw, only listened to her. They said to each other, "Look at her—yes, it is she!" "Who?—the Spaniard?" "Yes—the débutante, *l'amante del Zustiniani*."

Consuelo entered, self-possessed and serious. Casting her eyes around, she received the plaudits of the spectators with a propriety of manner equally devoid of humility and coquetry, and sang a recitative with so firm a voice, with accents so lofty, and a self-possession so victorious, that cries of admiration from the very first resounded from every part of the theatre. "Ah! the perfidious creature has deceived me," exclaimed Corilla, darting a terrible look towards Anzoletto, who could not resist raising his eyes to hers with an ill-disguised smile. She threw herself back upon her seat, and burst into tears.

Consuelo proceeded a little further; while old Lotti was heard muttering with his cracked voice from his corner, "*Amici miei, questo è un portento!*"

She sang a bravura, and was ten times interrupted. They shouted "Encore!" they recalled her to the stage seven times, amid thunders of applause. At length the furor of Venetian dilettantism displayed itself in all its ridiculous and absurd excesses. "Why do they cry out thus?" said Consuelo, as she retired behind the scenes only to be brought back immediately by the vociferous applause of the pit. "One would think that they wished to stone me."

From that moment they paid but a secondary attention to Anzoletto. They received him very well indeed, because they were in a happy vein; but the indulgence with which they passed over the passages in which he failed, without immediately applauding those in which he succeeded, showed him very plainly, that however he might please the ladies, the noisy majority of males held him cheaply, and reserved their tempestuous applause for the prima donna. Not one among all those who had come with hostile intentions, ventured a murmur; and in truth there were not three among them who could withstand the irresistible inclination to applaud the wonder of the day.

The piece had the greatest success, although it was not listened to and nobody was occupied with the music in itself. It was quite in the Italian style—graceful, touching, and gave no indication of the author of *Alcestes* and *Orpheus*. There were not many striking beauties to astonish the audience. After the first act, the German maestro was called for, with Anzoletto, the débutante, and Clorinda, who, thanks to the protection of Consuelo, had sung through the second part with a flat voice, and an inferior tone, but whose beautiful arms propitiated the spectators—Rosalba, whom she had replaced, being very lean.

In the last act, Anzoletto, who secretly watched Corilla, and perceived her increasing agitation, thought it prudent to seek her in her box, in order to avert any explosion. So soon as she perceived him she threw herself upon him like a tigress, bestowed several vigorous cuffs, the least of which was so smart as to draw blood, leaving a mark that red and white could not immediately cover. The angry tenor settled matters by a thrust on the breast, which threw the singer gasping into the arms of her sister Rosalba. "Wretch!—traitor!" she murmured in a choking voice, "your Consuelo and you shall perish by my hand!"

"If you make a step, a movement, a single gesture, I will stab you in the face of Venice," replied Anzoletto, pale and with clenched teeth, while his faithful knife, which he knew how to use with all the dexterity of a man of the lagunes, gleamed before her eyes.

"He would do as he says," murmured the terrified Rosalba; "be silent—let us leave this; we are here in danger of our lives."

Although this tragi-comic scene had taken place after the manner of the Venetians, in a mysterious and rapid *sotto voce*, on seeing the débutante pass quickly behind the scenes to regain his box, his cheek hidden in his hand, they suspected some petty squabble. The hair-dresser, who was called to adjust the curls of the Grecian prince, and to plaster up his wound, related to the whole band of choristers that an amorous cat had sunk her claw into the face of the hero. The aforesaid barber was accustomed to this kind of wounds, and was no new confidant of such adventures. The anecdote made the round of the stage, penetrated no one knew how, into the body of the house, found its way into the orchestra, the boxes, and with some additions, descended to the pit. They were not yet aware of the position of Anzoletto with regard to Corilla; but some had noticed his apparent devotion to Clorinda, and the general report was, that the *seconda donna*, jealous of the *prima donna*, had just blackened the eye and broken three teeth of the handsomest of tenors.

This was sad news for some, but an exquisite bit of scandal for the majority. They wondered if the representation would be put off, or whether the old tenor Stefanini, should have to appear, roll in hand, to finish the part. The curtain rose, and everything was forgotten on seeing Consuelo appear, calm and sublime as at the beginning. Although her part was not extremely tragical, she made it so by the power of her acting and the expression of her voice. She called forth tears, and when the tenor reappeared, the slight scratch only excited a smile; but this absurd incident prevented his success from being so brilliant, and all the glory of the evening was reserved for Consuelo, who was applauded to the last with frenzy.

After the play, they went to sup at the Palace Zustiniani, and Anzoletto forgot Corilla, whom he had shut up in her box, and who was

forced to burst it open in order to leave it. In the tumult which always follows so successful a representation, her retreat was not noticed; but the next day, this broken door coincided so well with the torn face of Anzoletto, that the love affair, hitherto so carefully concealed, was made known.

Hardly was he seated at the sumptuous banquet which the count gave in honor of Consuelo, and at which the Venetian dilettanti handed to the triumphant actress sonnets and mandrigals composed the evening before, when a valet slipped under his plate a little billet from Corilla, which he read aside, and which was to the following effect:—

“If you do not come to me this instant, I shall go to seek you openly, were you even at the end of the world—were you even at the feet of your Consuelo, thrice accursed!”

Anzoletto pretended to be seized with a fit of coughing, and retired to write an answer with a pencil on a piece of ruled paper which he had torn in the antechamber of the count from a music-book:—

“Come if you will. My knife is ready, and with it my scorn and hatred.”

The despot was well aware that with such a creature fear was the only restraint; that threats were the only expedient at the moment; but in spite of himself he was gloomy and absent during the repast, and as soon as it was over he hurried off to go to Corilla.

He found the unhappy girl in a truly pitiable condition. Convulsions were followed by torrents of tears. She was seated at the window, her hair dishevelled, her eyes swollen with weeping, and her dress disordered. She sent away her sister and maid, and in spite of herself, a ray of joy overspread her features, at finding herself with him whom she had feared she might never see again. But Anzoletto knew her too well to seek to comfort her. He knew that at the first appearance of pity or penitence he would see her fury revive, and seize upon revenge. He resolved to keep up the appearance of inflexible harshness; and although he was moved with her despair, he overwhelmed her with cruel reproaches, declaring that he was only come to bid her an eternal farewell. He suffered her to throw herself at his feet, to cling to his knees even to the door, and to implore his pardon in the anguish of grief. When he had thus subdued and humbled her, he pretended to be somewhat moved, and promising to return in the morning, he left her.

CHAPTER XVIII

WHEN Anzoletto awoke the following morning, he experienced a reverse of the jealousy with which Count Zustiniani had inspired him. A thousand opposing sentiments divided his soul. First, that other jealousy which the genius and success of Consuelo had awakened in his bosom. This sank the deeper in his breast in proportion as he measured the triumph of his betrothed with what in his blighted ambition he was pleased to call his downfall. Again,

the mortification of being supplanted in reality, as he was already thought to be, with her, now so triumphant and powerful, and of whom the preceding evening he was so pleased to believe himself the only lover. These two feelings possessed him by turns, and he knew not to which to give himself up, in order to extinguish the other. He had to choose between two things, either to remove Consuelo from the count and from Venice, and along with her to seek his fortune elsewhere, or to abandon her to his rival, and take his chance alone in some distant country with no drawback to his success. In this poignant uncertainty, in place of endeavoring to recover his calmness with his true friend, he returned to Corilla and plunged back into the storm. She added fuel to the flame, by showing him, even in stronger colors than he had imagined the preceding night, all the disadvantages of his position. "No person," said she, "is a prophet in his own country. This is a bad place for one who has been seen running about in rags, and where every one may say—(and God knows the nobles are sufficiently given to boast of the protection, even when it is only imaginary, which they accord to artists)—'I was his protector; I saw his hidden talent; it was I who recommended and gave him a preference.' You have lived too much in public here, my poor Anzoletto. Your charming features struck those who knew not what was in you. You astonished people who have seen you in their gondolas singing the stanzas of Tasso, or doing their errands to gain the means of support. The plain Consuelo, leading a retired life, appears here as a strange wonder. Besides she is a Spaniard, and uses not the Venetian accent; and her agreeable, though somewhat singular pronunciation, would please them, even were it detestable. It is something of which their ears are not tired. Your good looks have contributed mainly to the slight success you obtained in the first act; but now people are accustomed to you."

"Do not forget to mention that the handsome scratch you gave me beneath the eye, and for which I ought never to pardon you, will go far to lessen the last-mentioned trifling advantage."

"On the contrary, it is a decided advantage in the eyes of women, but frivolous in those of men. You will reign in the saloons with one party, without the other you would fall at the theatre. But how can you expect to occupy their attention, when it is a woman who disputes it with you—a woman who not only enthrals the serious dilettanti, but who intoxicates by her grace and the magic of her sex, all who are not connoisseurs in music. To struggle with me, how much talent did Stefanini, Savario—all indeed who have appeared with me on the stage, require!"

"In that case, dear Corilla, I should run as much risk in appearing with you as with Consuelo. If I were inclined to follow you to France, you have given me fair warning."

These words which escaped from Anzoletto were as a ray of light to Corilla. She saw that she had hit the mark more nearly than she had supposed, for the thought of leaving Venice had already dawned in the mind of her lover. The instant she conceived the idea of bearing him away with her, she spared no pains to make him relish the project. She humbled herself as much as she could, and even had the modesty to place herself below her rival. She admitted that she was not a great singer, nor yet sufficiently beautiful to attract the public; and as all this was even truer than she cared to think, and as Anzoletto was very well aware of it, having never been deceived as to

the immense superiority of Consuelo, she had little trouble in persuading him. Their partnership and flight were almost determined upon at this interview, and Anzoleto thought seriously of it, although he always kept a loop-hole for escape if necessary.

Corilla, seeing his uncertainty, urged him to continue to appear, in hopes of better success; but quite sure that these unlucky trials would disgust him altogether with Venice and with Consuelo.

On leaving his fair adviser, he went to seek his only real friend, Consuelo. He felt an unconquerable desire to see her again. It was the first time he had begun and ended a day without receiving her chaste kiss upon his brow; but as, after what had passed with Corilla, he would have blushed for his own instability, he persuaded himself that he only went to receive assurance of her unfaithfulness, and to undeceive himself as to his love for her. "Doubtless," said he, "the count has taken advantage of my absence to urge his suit, and who can tell how far he has been successful?" This idea caused a cold perspiration to stand upon his forehead; and the thought of Consuelo's perfidy so affected him that he hastened his steps, thinking to find her bathed in tears. Then an inward voice, which drowned every other, told him that he wronged a being so pure and noble, and he slackened his pace, reflecting on his own odious conduct, his selfish ambition, and the deceit and treachery with which he had stored his life and conscience, and which must inevitably bear their bitter fruit.

He found Consuelo in her black dress, seated beside her table, pure, serene, and tranquil, as he had ever beheld her. She came forward to meet him with the same affection as ever, and questioned him with anxiety, but without distrust or reproach, as to the employment of his time during his absence.

"I have been suffering," said he, with the very deep despondency which his inward humiliation had occasioned. "I hurt my head against a decoration, and although I told you it was nothing, it so confused me that I was obliged to leave the Palazzo Zustiniani last night, lest I should faint and have to keep my bed all the morning."

"Oh, Heavens!" said Consuelo, kissing the wound inflicted by her rival; "you have suffered, and still suffer."

"No, the rest has done me good: do not think of it; but tell me how you managed to get home all alone last night."

"Alone? Oh, no; the count brought me in his gondola."

"Ah, I was sure of it," cried Anzoleto, in a constrained voice. "And of course he said a great many flattering things to you in this interview."

"What could he say that he has not already said a hundred times? He would spoil me and make me vain; were I not on my guard against him. Besides, we were not alone; my good master accompanied me—ah! my excellent friend and master."

"What master?—what excellent friend?" said Anzoleto, once more reassured, and already absent and thoughtful.

"Why, Porpora, to be sure. What are you thinking of?"

"I am thinking, dear Consuelo, of your triumph yesterday evening: are you not thinking of it too?"

"Less than of yours, I assure you."

"Mine! ah, do not jest, dear friend; mine was so meagre that it rather resembled a downfall."

Consuelo grew pale with surprise. Notwithstanding her remarks—

ble self-possession, she had not the necessary coolness to appreciate the different degrees of applause bestowed on herself and her lover. There is in this sort of ovation an intoxication which the wisest artists cannot shun, and which deceives some so widely as to induce them to look upon the support of a cabal as a public triumph. But instead of exaggerating the favor of her audience, Consuelo, terrified by so frightful a noise, had hardly understood it, and could not distinguish the preference awarded to her over Anzoletto. She artlessly chid him for his unreasonable expectations; and seeing that she could not persuade him, nor conquer his sadness, she gently reproached him with being too desirous of glory, and with attaching too much value to the favor of the world. "I have always told you," said she, "that you prefer the results of art to art itself. When we do our best—when we feel that we have done well—it seems to me that a little more or less of approbation can neither increase nor lessen our internal content. Hold in mind what Porpora said to me, when I first sang at the Palazzo Zustiniani: 'Whoever feels that he is truly pervaded with the love of his art has no room for fear.'"

"Oh, your Porpora and you!" cried Anzoletto, spitefully, "it is well for you to feed yourselves on those fine maxims. Nothing can be easier than to philosophise on the evils of life, when we are acquainted only with its advantages. Porpora, though poor, and his authority disputed, has won himself a great name. He has gathered laurels enough to grow gray in peace beneath their shade. You who know yourself invincible, are of course fearless. You spring at one bound to the highest step of the ladder, and reproach those who are lame that they are dizzy. It is scarce charitable, Consuelo, and is horribly unjust. And, again, your argument applies not to me. You say that the applause of the public is not to be heeded as long as we have our own. But suppose I have not the inward conscience of well-doing? And can you not perceive that I am wofully out of sorts with myself? could you not see that I was abominable? could you not hear that I sang pitifully?"

"I could not—for it was not so. You were nor greater nor less than yourself. Your own emotions deprived you of almost all your resources. That soon passed, and the music which you knew you sang well."

"And the music which I did not know?" said Anzoletto, fixing his great black eyes, rendered cavernous by weariness and vexation, upon her, "what of that?"

She heaved a sigh, and held her peace awhile. Then, embracing him as she spoke,— "The music which you do not know you must learn. Had you chosen to study seriously during the rehearsals. Did I not tell you so? But the time for reproaches has gone by. Come now, let us take but two hours a day, and you will see how quickly we will surmount the obstacles."

"Can it be done in a day?"

"It cannot be done under several months."

"And I have got to play to-morrow! Am I to go on appearing before an audience which attends to my defects more than it does to my good qualities?"

"It will soon appreciate your endeavors."

"Who can say that? It may take a distaste for me."

"It has proved the contrary."

"Ah! so you think it has treated me with indulgence?"

"If you ask me—it has, my dear; where you failed it was kind—where you made hits it did you justice."

"But in the meantime I shall get but a miserable engagement."

"The count is liberal to magnificence in all his dealings, and counts no expense. Moreover, does he not offer me more than enough to maintain us both in opulence?"

"That is to say that I am to live on your success."

"Why not? I lived long enough on your favor."

"It is not merely money of which I am thinking. Let him engage me as low as he please, I care not; but he will engage me for second or third parts."

"He cannot lay his hand on any other *primo nomo*. He has reckoned on you long, and thinks of none other than you. Besides, he is all on your side. You said he would oppose our marriage. So far from it, he seems to wish it to take place, and often asks when I am going to ask him to my wedding."

"Excellent—good, forsooth! A thousand thanks, Signor Count!"

"What do you mean?"

"Nothing. Only you were very wrong for not hindering me from making my debut before I had corrected these faults, which, it seems, you knew better than I did myself, by better studies. For, I repeat, you know all my faults."

"Have I ever failed in frankness with you? Have I not often warned you of them? No; you told me that the public knew nothing about it, and when I heard of the great success you had met with at the count's, the first time you sung in his palace, I thought that——"

"That the fashionable world knew no more about it than the vulgar world."

"I thought that your brilliant qualities had struck them more forcibly than your weak points, and, as I think, such has been the case with both parties."

"In fact she is quite right," thought Anzoletto to himself. "If I could but defer my debut; but it would be running the risk of seeing another tenor called into my place, who would never make way for me. Come," he added, after walking twice or thrice up and down the room, "what are my faults?"

"I have told you them very often—too much boldness, and not enough study. An energy factitious and feverish, rather than felt. Dramatic effects, the result of will rather than of sentiment. You never penetrated to the inner meaning of your part. You picked it up piecemeal. You have discovered in it only a succession of more or less brilliant hits. You have neither hit on the scale of their connexion, nor sustained, nor developed them. Eager to display your fine voice, and the facility which you possess in certain points, you showed as much power in your first as in your last entrance on the stage. On the least opportunity you strove for an effect, and all your effects were identical. At the end of your first act you were known, and known, too, by heart—but they were unconscious that there was nothing more to be known, and something prodigious was expected from you at the finale. That something you lacked. Your emotion was exhausted, and your voice had no longer the same fullness. You perceived this yourself, and endeavored to force both. Your audience perceived this, too, and to your great surprise they were cold where you thought yourself the most pathetic. The cause

was this, that when they looked for the actor's passion they found only the actor's struggle for success."

"And how do others get on?" cried Anzoletto, stamping his foot for rage. "Do you think I have not heard them all—all who have been applauded in Venice these last ten years? Did not old Stefannini screech when his voice gave out? and was he not still applauded to the echo?"

"It is quite true; and I never believed that the audience were so mistaken. I doubt not they bore in mind the time when he had all his powers, and felt unwilling to allow him to feel the defects and misfortunes of his old age."

"And Corilla—what have you to say to her—the idol whom you overthrew?—did not she force her effects, did she not make exertions painful, both to the eye and ear? Were her passions, was her excitement, real when she was vaunted to the skies?"

"It is because I knew all her resources to be fictitious, all her efforts atrocious, her acting, no less than her singing, utterly deficient, both in taste and dignity, that I came upon the stage so confidently, being satisfied, as you were, that the public did not know much about it."

"Ah, you are probing my worst wound, my poor Consuelo!" said Anzoletto, sighing very deeply ere he spoke.

"How so, my well beloved?"

"How so?—can you ask me?—we were both deceiving ourselves, Consuelo. The public knows right well. Its instincts reveal to it all which its ignorance covers with a shroud. It is a great baby, which must have amusement and excitement. It is satisfied with whatever they give it; but once show it anything better, and at once it compares and comprehends. Corilla could enthral it last week, though she sang out of tune and was short-breathed. You made your appearance, and Corilla was ruined; she is blotted out of their memories—entombed. If she should appear again she would be hissed off the stage. Had I made my debut with her, I should have succeeded as thoroughly as I did on the night when I sang after her for the first time at the Palazzo Zustiniani. But compared with you I was eclipsed. It needs must have been so; and so it ever will be. The public had a taste for pinchbeck. It took false stones for jewels; it was dazzled. A diamond of the first water is shown to it, and at a glance it sees that it has been grossly cheated. It can be humbugged no longer with sham diamonds, and when it meets them does justice on them at sight. This, Consuelo, has been my misfortune: to have made my appearance, a mere bit of Venetian bead-work, beside an invaluable pearl from the treasures of the sea."

Consuelo did not then apprehend all the bitterness and truth which lay in these reflections. She set them down to the score of the affection of her betrothed, and rep'ed to what she took for mere flatteries by smiles and caresses only.

CHAPTER XIX.

ENCOURAGED by Consuelo's frankness, and by the faithless Corilla's perfidy, to present himself once more in public, Anzoletto began to work vigorously, so that at the second representation of *Ipermestra* he sang much better. But as the success of Consuelo was proportionably greater, he was still dissatisfied, and began to feel discouraged by this confirmation of his inferiority. Everything from this moment wore a sinister aspect. It appeared to him that they did not listen to him—that the spectators who were near him were making humiliating observations upon his singing—and that benevolent amateurs, who encouraged him behind the scenes, did so with an air of pity. Their praises seemed to have a double meaning, of which he applied the less favorable to himself. Corilla, whom he went to consult in her box between the acts, pretended to ask him with a frightened air if he were not ill.

"Why?" said he, impatiently.

"Because your voice is dull, and you seem overcome. Dear Anzoletto, strive to regain your powers, which were paralyzed by fear or discouragement."

"Did I not sing my first air well?"

"Not half so well as on the first occasion. My heart sank so that I found myself on the point of fainting."

"But the audience applauded me, nevertheless."

"Alas! what does it signify? I was wrong to dispel your illusion. Continue then; but endeavor to clear your voice."

"Consuelo," thought he, "meant to give me good advice. She acts from instinct, and succeeds. But where could I gain the experience which would enable me to restrain the unruly public? In following her counsel I lose my own natural advantages; and they reckon nothing on the improvement of my style. Come, let me return to my early confidence. At my first appearance at the count's, I saw that I could dazzle those whom I failed to persuade. Did not old Porpora tell me that I had the blemishes of genius. Come, then, let me bend this public to my dictation, and make it bow to the yoke."

He exerted himself to the utmost, achieved wonders in the second act, and was listened to with surprise. Some clapped their hands, others imposed silence, while the majority inquired whether it were sublime or detestable.

A little more boldness, and Anzoletto might perhaps have won the day; but this reverse affected him so much that he became confused, and broke down shamefully in the remainder of his part.

At the third representation he had resumed his confidence, and resolved to go on in his own way. Not heeding the advice of Consuelo, he hazarded the wildest caprices, the most daring absurdities. Cries of "oh, shame!" mingled with hisses, once or twice interrupted the silence with which these desperate attempts were received. The good and generous public silenced the hisses and began to applaud; but it was easy to perceive the kindness was for the person, the blame for the artist. Anzoletto tore his dress on re-entering his box, and scarcely had the representation terminated, than he flew to Corilla, a prey to the deepest rage, and resolved to fly with her to the ends of the earth.

Three days passed without his seeing Consuelo. She inspired neither with hatred nor coldness, but merely with terror; for in the depths of a soul pierced with remorse, he still cherished her image, and suffered cruelly from not seeing her. He felt the superiority of a being who overwhelmed him in public with her superiority, but who secretly held possession of his confidence and his good will. In his agitation he betrayed to Corilla how truly he was bound to his noble-hearted betrothed, and what an empire she held over his mind. Corilla was mortified, but knew how to conceal it. She pitied him, elicited a confession, and so soon as she had learned the secret of his jealousy, she struck a grand blow, by making Zustiniani aware of their mutual affection, thinking that the count would immediately acquaint Consuelo, and thus render a reconciliation impossible.

Surprised to find another day pass away in the solitude of her garret, Consuelo grew uneasy; and as still another day of mortal anguish and vain expectation drew to its close, she wrapped herself in a thick mantle, for the famous singer was no longer sheltered by her obscurity, and ran to the house occupied for some weeks by Anzoletto, a more comfortable abode than what he had before enjoyed, and one of numerous houses which the count possessed in the city. She did not find him, and learned that he was seldom there.

This did not enlighten her as to his infidelity. She knew his wandering and poetic habits, and thought that, not feeling at home in these sumptuous abodes, he had returned to his old quarters. She was about to continue her search, when, on returning to pass the door a second time, she found herself face to face with Porpora.

"Consuelo," said he in a low voice, "it is useless to hide from me your features. I have just heard your voice, and cannot be mistaken in it. What do you here at this hour, my poor child, and whom do you seek in this house?"

"I seek my betrothed," replied Consuelo, while she passed her arm within that of her old master; "and I do not know why I should blush to confess it to my best friend. I see very well that you disapprove of my attachment, but I could not tell an untruth. I am unhappy; I have not seen Anzoletto since the day before yesterday at the theatre; he must be unwell."

"He unwell!" said the professor, shrugging his shoulders. "Come, my poor girl, we must talk over this matter; and since you have at last opened your heart to me, I must open mine also. Give me your arm: we can converse as we go along. Listen, Consuelo, and attend earnestly to what I say. You cannot—you ought not—to be the wife of this young man. I forbid you, in the name of God, who has inspired me with the feelings of a father towards you."

"Oh, my master," replied Consuelo, mournfully, "ask of me the sacrifice of my life, but not that of my love."

"I do not ask it—I command it," said Porpora, firmly. "The lover is accursed—he will prove your torment and your shame, if you do not forswear him for ever."

"Dear master," replied she, with a sad and tender smile, "you have told me so very often; I have endeavored in vain to obey you. You dislike this poor youth; you do not know him, and I am certain you will alter your mind."

"Consuelo," said the master, more decidedly, "I have till now, I know, made vain and useless objections. I spoke to you as an artist, and as to an artist—as I only saw one in your betrothed. Now I

“speak to you as a man—I speak to you of a man—and I address you as a woman. This woman’s love is wasted: the man is unworthy of it, and he who tells you so knows he speaks the truth.”

“Oh, Heaven! Anzoletto—my only friend, my protector, my brother—unworthy of my love! Ah, you do not know what he has done for me—how he has cared for me since I was left alone in the world. I must tell you all.” And Consuelo related the history of her life and of her love, and it was one and the same history.

Porpora was affected, but not to be shaken from his purpose.

“In all this,” said he, “I see nothing but your innocence, your virtue, your fidelity. As to him, I see very well that he has need of your society and your instructions, to which, whatever you may think, he owes the little that he knows, and the little he is worth. It is not however, the less true, that this pure and upright lover is no better than a castaway—that he spends his time and money in low dissipation—and only thinks of turning you to the best account in forwarding his career.”

“Take heed to what you say,” replied Consuelo, in suffocating accents. “I have always believed in you, oh, my master! after God; but as to what concerns Anzoletto, I have resolved to close my heart and my ears. Ah, suffer me to leave you,” she added, taking her arm from the professor—“it is death to listen to you.”

“Let it be death then to your fatal passion, and through the truth let me restore you to life,” he said, pressing her arm to his generous and indignant breast. “I know that I am rough, Consuelo—I cannot be otherwise; and therefore it is that I have put off as long as I could the blow which I am about to inflict. I had hoped that you would open your eyes, in order that you might comprehend what was going on around you. But in place of being enlightened by experience, you precipitate yourself blindly into the abyss. I will not suffer you to do so—you, the only one for whom I have cared for many years. You must not perish—no, you must not perish.”

“But, my kind friend, I am in no danger. Do you believe that I tell an untruth when I assure you by all that is sacred that I have respected my mother’s wishes? I am not Anzoletto’s wife, but I am his betrothed.”

“And you were seeking this evening the man who may not and cannot be your husband.”

“Who told you so?”

“Would Corilla ever permit him?”

“Corilla!—what has he to say to Corilla?”

“We are but a few paces from this girl’s abode. Do you seek your betrothed?—if you have courage, you will find him there.”

“No, no! a thousand times no!” said Consuelo, tottering as she went, and leaning for support against the wall. “Let me live, my master—do not kill me ere I have well begun to live. I told you that it was death to listen to you.”

“You must drink of the cup,” said the inexorable old man; “I but fulfil your destiny.—Having only realised ingratitude, and consequently made the objects of my tenderness and attention unhappy, I must say the truth to those I love. It is the only thing a heart long withered and rendered callous by suffering and despair can do. I pity you, poor girl, in that you have not a friend more gentle and humane to sustain you in such a crisis. But such as I am I must be; I must act upon others, if not as with the sun’s genial heat, with the lightning’s

blasting power. So then, Consuelo, let there be no faltering between us. Come to this palace. You must surprise your faithless lover at the feet of the treacherous Corilla. If you cannot walk, I must drag you along—if you cannot stand, I shall carry you. Ah, old Porpora is yet strong, when the fire of Divine anger burns in his heart.”

“Mercy! mercy!” exclaimed Consuelo, pale as death. “Suffer me yet to doubt. Give me a day, were it but a single day, to believe in him—I am not prepared for this affliction.”

“No, not a day—not a single hour,” replied he inflexibly. “Away! I shall not be able to recall the passing hour, to lay the truth open to you; and the faithless one will take advantage of the day which you ask, to place you again under the dominion of falsehood. Come with me, I command you—I insist on it.”

“Well, I will go!” exclaimed Consuelo, regaining strength, through a violent reaction of her love. “I will go, were it only to demonstrate your injustice and the truth of my lover; for you deceive yourself unworthily, as you would also deceive me. Come, then, executioner as you are, I shall follow, for I do not fear you.”

Porpora took her at her word; and, seizing her with a hand of iron, he conducted her to the mansion which he inhabited. Having passed through the corridors and mounted the stairs, they reached at last a terrace, whence they could distinguish over the roof of a lower building, completely uninhabited, the palace of Corilla, entirely darkened with the exception of one lighted window, which opened upon the sombre and silent front of the deserted house. Any one at this window might suppose that no person could see them; for the balcony prevented any one from seeing up from below. There was nothing level with it, and above, nothing but the cornice of the house which Porpora inhabited, and which was not placed so as to command the palace of the singer. But Corilla was ignorant that there was at the angle a projection covered with lead, a sort of recess concealed by a large chimney, where the maestro with artistic caprice came every evening to gaze at the stars, shun his fellows, and dream of sacred or dramatic subjects. Chance had thus revealed to him the intimacy of Anzoletto with Corilla, and Consuelo had only to look in the direction pointed out, to discover her lover in a tender tête-à-tête with her rival. She instantly turned away: and Porpora, who dreading the effects of the sight upon her, had held her with superhuman strength, led her to a lower story in his apartments, shutting the door and window to conceal the explosion which he anticipated.

CHAPTER XX.

BUT there was no explosion. Consuelo remained silent, and as it were stunned. Porpora spoke to her. She made no reply, and signed to him not to question her. She then rose, and going to a large pitcher of iced water which stood on the harpsichord, swallowed large draughts of it, took several turns up and down the apartment, and sat down before her master without uttering a word.

The austere old man did not comprehend the extremity of her sufferings.

"Well," said he, "did I deceive you? What do you think of doing?"

A painful shudder shook her motionless figure—she passed her hand over her forehead.

"I can think of nothing," said she, "till I understand what has happened to me."

"And what remains to be understood?"

"Everything! because I understand nothing. I am seeking for the cause of my misfortune without finding anything to explain it to me. What have I done to Anzoletto that he should cease to love me? What fault have I committed to render me unworthy in his eyes? You cannot tell me, for I searched into my own heart and can find there no key to the mystery. O! it is inconceivable. My mother believed in the power of charms. Is Corilla a magician?"

"My poor child," said the maestro, "there is indeed a magician, but she is called Vanity; there is indeed a poison, which is called Envy. Corilla can dispense it, but it was not she who molded the soul so fitted for its reception. The venom already flowed in the impure veins of Anzoletto. An extra dose has changed him from a knave into a traitor—faithless as well as ungrateful."

"What vanity, what envy?"

"The vanity of surpassing others. The desire to excel, and rage at being surpassed by you."

"Is that possible? Can a man be jealous of the advantages of a woman? Can a lover be displeased with the success of his beloved? Alas! there are indeed many things which I neither know nor understand."

"And will never comprehend, but which you will experience every hour of your existence. You will learn that a man can be jealous of the superiority of a woman, when this man is an ambitious artist: and that a lover can loathe the success of his beloved when the theatre is the arena of their efforts. It is because the actor is no longer a man, Consuelo—he is turned into a woman. He lives but through the medium of his sickly vanity, which alone he seeks to gratify and for which alone he labors. The beauty of a woman he feels a grievance; her talent extinguishes or competes with his own. A woman is his rival, or rather he is the rival of a woman; he has all the littleness, all the caprice, all the wants, all the ridiculous airs of a coquette. This is the character of the greatest number of persons belonging to the theatre. There are indeed grand exceptions, but they are so rare, so admirable, that one should bow before them and render them homage, as to the wisest and best. Anzoletto is no exception; he is the vainest of the vain. In that one word you have the explanation of his conduct."

"But what unintelligible revenge. What poor and insufficient means! How can Corilla recompense him for his losses with the public? Had he only spoken openly to me of his sufferings (alas! it needed only a word for that,) I should have understood him perhaps—at least I would have compassionated him, and retired to yield him the first place."

"It is the peculiarity of envy to hate people in proportion to the happiness of which it deprives them; just as it is the peculiarity of selfish love to hate in the object which we love, the pleasure which we are not the means of procuring him. Whilst your lover abhors the public which loads you with glory, do you not hate the rival who intoxicates him with her charms?"

"My master, you have uttered a profound reflection, which I would fain ponder on."

"It is true. While Anzoletto detests you for your happiness on the stage, you hate him for his happiness in the boudoir of Corilla."

"It is not so. I could not hate him; and you have made me feel that it would be cowardly and disgraceful to hate my rival. As to the passion with which she fills him, I shudder to think of it—why, I know not. If it be involuntary on his part, Anzoletto is not guilty in hating my success."

"You are quick to interpret matters, so as to excuse his conduct and sentiments. No; Anzoletto is not innocent or estimable in his suffering like you. He deceives, he disgraces you, whilst you endeavor to justify him. However, I did not wish to inspire you with hatred and resentment, but with calmness and indifference. The character of this man influences his conduct. You will never change him. Decide, and think only of yourself."

"Of myself—of myself alone? Of myself, without hope or love?"

"Think of music, the divine art, Consuelo; you would not care to say that you love it only for Anzoletto?"

"I have loved art for itself also; but I never separated in my thoughts these inseparable objects—my life and that of Anzoletto. How shall I be able to love anything when the half of my existence is taken away?"

"Anzoletto was nothing more to you than an idea, and this idea imparted life. You will replace it by one greater, purer, more elevating. Your soul, your genius, your entire being, will no longer be at the mercy of a deceitful, fragile form; you shall contemplate the sublime ideal stripped of its earthly covering; you shall mount heavenward, and live in holy unison with God himself."

"Do you wish, as you once did, that I should become a nun?"

"No; this would confine the exercise of your artistic faculties to one direction, whereas you should embrace all. Whatever you do, or wherever you are, in the theatre or in the cloister, you may be a saint, the bride of heaven."

"What you say is full of sublimity, but shrouded in a mysterious garb. Permit me to retire, dear master; I require time to collect my thoughts and question my heart."

"You have said it, Consuelo; you need insight into yourself. Hitherto in giving up your heart and your prospects to one so much your inferior, you have not known yourself. You have mistaken your destiny, seeing that you were born without an equal, and consequently

without the possibility of an associate in this world. Solitude, absolute liberty, are needful for you. I would not wish you a husband, or lover, or family, or passions, or bonds of any kind. It is thus I have conceived your existence, and would direct your career. The day on which you give yourself away, you lose your divinity. Ah, if Mingotti and Moltini, my illustrious pupils, my powerful creations, had believed in me, they would have lived unrivalled on the earth. But woman is weak and curious; vanity blinds her, vain desires agitate, caprices hurry her away. In what do these disquietudes result?—what but in storms and weariness, in the loss, the destruction, or vitiation, of their genius. Would you not be more than they, Consuelo?—does not your ambition soar above the poor concerns of this life?—or would you not appease these vain desires, and seize the glorious crown of everlasting genius?"

Porpora continued to speak for a long time with an eloquence and energy to which I cannot do justice. Consuelo listened, her looks bent upon the ground. When he had finished, she said, "My dear master, you are profound; but I cannot follow you sufficiently throughout. It seems to me as if you outraged human nature in proscribing its most noble passions—as if you would extinguish the instincts which God himself has implanted, for the purpose of elevating what would otherwise be a monstrous and anti-social impulse. Were I a better Christian, I should perhaps better understand you; I shall try to become so, and that is all I can promise."

She took her leave, apparently tranquil, but in reality deeply agitated. The great though austere artist conducted her home, always preaching, but never convincing. He nevertheless was of infinite service in opening to her a vast field of serious thought and inquiry, wherein Anzoletto's particular crime served but as a painful and solemn introduction to thoughts of eternity. She passed long hours, praying, weeping, and reflecting; then lay down to rest, with a virtuous and confiding hope in a merciful and compassionate God.

The next day Porpora announced to her that there would be a rehearsal of *Ipermestra* for Stefanini, who was to fill Anzoletto's part. The latter was ill, confined to bed, and complained of a loss of voice. Consuelo's first impulse was to fly to him and nurse him. "Spare yourself this trouble," said the professor, "he is perfectly well; the physician of the theatre has said so, and he will be this evening with Corilla. But Count Zustiniani, who understands very well the meaning of it, and who consents without much regret that he should put off his appearance, has forbidden the physician to reveal the falsehood, and has requested the good Stefanini to return to the theatre for some days."

"But, good Heavens! what does Anzoletto mean to do? is he about to quit the theatre?"

"Yes—the theatre of San Samuel. In a month he is off with Corilla for France. That surprises you? He flies from the shadow which you cast over him. He has entrusted his fate to a woman whom he dreads less, and whom he will betray so soon as he finds he no longer requires her."

Consuelo turned pale, and pressed her hands convulsively on her bursting heart. Perhaps she had flattered herself with the idea of reclaiming Anzoletto, by reproaching him gently with his faults, and offering to put off her appearance for a time. This news was a dagger stroke to her, and she could not believe that she should no more see him whom she had so fondly loved. "Ah," said she, "it is but an uneasy dream; I must go and seek him; he will explain everything. He cannot follow this woman; it would be his destruction. I cannot permit him to do so; I will keep him back; I will make him aware of his true interests, if indeed he be any longer capable of comprehending them. Come with me, dear master; let us not forsake him."

"I will abandon you," said the angry Porpora, "and forever, if you commit any such folly. Entreat a wretch—dispute with Corilla? Ah, Santa Cecilia! distrust your Bohemian origin, extinguish your blind and wandering instincts. Come! they are waiting for you at the rehearsal. You will feel pleasure in singing with a master like Stefanini, a modest, generous, and well-informed artist."

He led her to the theatre, and then for the first time she felt an ab-

horror of this artist life, chained to the wants of the public, and obliged to repress one's own sentiments and emotions to obey those of others. This very rehearsal, the subsequent toilet, the performance of the evening, proved a frightful torment. Anzoletto was still absent. Next day there was to be an opera buffa of Galuppi's—*Arcifanfano Re de' Matti*. They had chosen this farce to please Stefanini, who was an excellent comic performer. Consuelo must now make those laugh whom she had formerly made weep. She was brilliant, charming, pleasing to the last degree, though plunged at the same time in despair. Twice or thrice sobs that would force their way found vent in a constrained gaiety, which would have appeared frightful to those who understood it. On retiring to her box, she fell down insensible. The public would have her return to receive their applause. She did not appear; a dreadful uproar took place, benches were broken, and people tried to gain the stage. Stefanini hastened to her box, half dressed, his hair dishevelled, and pale as a spectre. She allowed herself to be supported back upon the stage, where she was received with a shower of bouquets, and forced to stoop to pick up a laurel crown. "Ah, the pitiless monsters!" she murmured, as she retired behind the scenes.

"My sweet one," said the old singer, who gave her his hand, "you suffer greatly; but these little things," added he, picking up a bunch of brilliant flowers, "are a specific for all our woes; you will become used to it, and the time perhaps will arrive when you will only feel fatigue and uneasiness when they forget to crown."

"Oh, how hollow and trifling they are!" thought poor Consuelo. Having re-entered her box, she fainted away, literally upon a bed of flowers which had been gathered on the stage and thrown pell-mell upon the sofa. The tire-woman left the box to call a physician. Count Zustiniani remained for some instants alone by the side of his beautiful singer, who looked pale and broken as the beautiful jasmynes which strewed her couch. Carried away by his admiration, Zustiniani lost his reason, and yielding to his foolish hopes, he seized her hand and carried it to his lips. But his touch was odious to the pure-minded Consuelo. She roused herself to repel him, as if it had been the bite of a serpent. "Ah! far from me, said she, writhing in a species of delirium; far from me all love, all caresses, all honied words!—no love—no husband—no lover—no family for me! my dear master has said it—liberty, the ideal, solitude, glory!" And she melted into tears so agonizing that the count was alarmed, and casting himself on his knees beside her strove to tranquilize her; but he could find no words of soothing import to that pierced soul; and despite his efforts to conceal it, his passion would speak out. He perfectly understood the despairing love of the betrayed one, and he let too much of the ardor of the hopeful lover escape him. Consuelo seemed to listen, and mechanically drew her hand away from his, with a bewildered smile, which the count mistook for encouragement.

Some men, although possessing great tact and penetration in the world, are absurd in such conjunctures. The physician arrived and administered a sedative in the style which they called *drops*. Consuelo was then wrapped up in her mantle and carried to her gondola. The count entered with her, supporting her in his arms, and always talking of his loves, with some degree of eloquence, which, as he imagined, must carry conviction. At the end of a quarter of an hour, obtaining no response, he implored a reply, a glance.

"To what then shall I answer?" said Consuelo, "I have heard nothing."

Zustiniani, although at first discouraged, thought there could not be a better opportunity, and that this afflicted soul would be more accessible than after reflection and reason. He spoke again, but there was the same silence, the same abstraction, only that there was a not-to-be-mistaken effort, though without any angry demonstration, to repel his advances. When the gondola touched the shore, he tried to detain Consuelo for an instant to obtain a word of encouragement. "Ah, signor," said she, coldly, "excuse my weak state. I have heard badly, but I understand. Oh yes, I understand perfectly. I ask this night, this one night, to reflect, to recover from my distress. To-morrow, yes, to-morrow, I shall reply without fail."

"To-morrow! dear Consuelo, oh, it is an age! But I shall submit—only allow me at least to hope for your friendship."

"Oh, yes, yes! there is hope," replied Consuelo, in a constrained voice, placing her foot upon the bank; "but do not follow me," said she, as she motioned him with an imperious gesture back to the gondola; "otherwise there will be no room for hope."

Shame and anger restored her strength, but it was a nervous, feverish strength, which found vent in hysteric laughter as she ascended the stairs.

"You are very happy, Consuelo," said a voice in the darkness, which almost stunned her; "I congratulate you on your gaiety."

"Oh, yes," she replied, while she seized Anzoletto's arm violently, and rapidly ascended with him to her chamber. "I thank you, Anzoletto. You were right to congratulate me. I am truly happy—oh, so happy!"

Anzoletto, who had been waiting for her, had already lighted the lamp, and when the bluish light fell upon their agitated features, they both started back in affright.

"We are very happy, are we not, Anzoletto?" said she, with a choking voice, while her features were distorted with a smile that covered her cheeks with tears. "What think you of our happiness?"

"I think, Consuelo," replied he, with a calm and bitter smile, "that we have found it troublesome; but we shall get on better by-and-bye."

"You seemed to me to be much at home in Corilla's boudoir."

"And you, I find, very much at your ease in the gondola of the count."

"The count! You knew, then, Anzoletto, that the count wished to supplant you in my affections?"

"And in order not to annoy you, my dear, I prudently kept in the background."

"Ah, you knew it; and this is the time you have taken to abandon me."

"Have I not done well?—are you not content with your lot? The count is a generous lover, and the poor, condemned singer would have no business, I fancy, to contend with him."

"Porpora was right; you are an infamous man. Leave my sight! You do not deserve that I should justify myself. It would be a stain were I to regret you. Leave me, I tell you; but first know, that you can come out at Venice and re-enter San Samuel with Corilla. Never shall my mother's daughter set foot upon the vile boards of a theatre again."

"The daughter of your mother the *zingara* will play the great lady in the villa of Zustiniani, on the shores of the Brenta. It will be a fair career, and I shall be glad of it."

"Oh my mother!" exclaimed Consuelo, turning towards the bed and falling on her knees, as she buried her face in the counterpane which had served as a shroud for the *zingara*.

Anzoleto was terrified and afflicted by this energetic movement, and the convulsive sobs which burst from the breast of Consuelo. Rasmorse seized on his heart, and he approached his betrothed to raise her in his arms; but she rose of herself, and pushing him from her with wild strength, thrust him towards the door, exclaiming as she did so, "Away—away! from my heart, from my memory!—farewell forever!"

Anzoleto had come to seek her with a low and selfish design; nevertheless it was the best thing he could have done. He could not bear to leave her, and he had struck out a plan to reconcile matters. He meant to inform her of the danger she ran from the designs of Zustiniani, and thus remove her from the theatre. In this resolution he paid full homage to the pride and purity of Consuelo. He knew her incapable of tampering with a doubtful position, or of accepting protection which ought to make her blush. His guilty and corrupt soul still retained unshaken faith in the innocence of this young girl, whom he was certain of finding as faithful and devoted as he had left her days before. But how reconcile this devotion with the preconceived design of deceiving her, and, without a rupture with Corilla, of remaining still her betrothed, her friend? He wished to re-enter the theatre with the latter, and could not think of separating at the very moment when his success depended on her. This audacious and cowardly plan was nevertheless formed in his mind, and he treated Consuelo as the Italian women do those madonnas whose protection they implore in the hour of repentance, and whose faces they veil in their erring moments.

When he beheld her so brilliant and so gay, in her buffa part at the theatre, he began to fear that he had lost too much time in maturing his design. When he saw her return in the gondola of the count, and approach with a joyous burst of laughter, he feared he was too late, and vexation seized him; but when she rose above his insults, and banished him with scorn, respect returned with fear, and he wandered long on the stair and on the quay, expecting her to recall him. He even ventured to knock and implore pardon through the door; but a deep silence reigned in that chamber, whose threshold he was never to cross with Consuelo again. He retired, confused and chagrined, determined to return on the morrow, and flattering himself that he should then prove more successful.—"After all," said he to himself, "my project will succeed; she knows the count's love, and all that is requisite is half done."

Overwhelmed with fatigue, he slept: long in the afternoon he went to Corilla.

"Great news!" she exclaimed, running to meet him with outstretched arms; "Consuelo is off!"

"Off! gracious Heaven!—whither, and with whom?"

"To Vienna, where Porpora has sent her, intending to join her there herself. She has deceived us all, the little cheat. She was engaged for the emperor's theatre, where Porpora proposes that she should appear in his new opera."

"Gone! gone without a word!" exclaimed Anzoletto, rushing towards the door.

"It is of no use seeking her in Venice," said Corilla with a sneering smile and a look of triumph. "She set out for Palestrina at day-break, and is already far from this on the mainland. Zustiniani, who thought himself beloved, but who was only made a fool of, is furious, and confined to his couch with fever; but he sent Porpora to me just now, to try and get me to sing this evening; and Stefanini, who is tired of the stage, and anxious to enjoy the sweets of retirement in his cassino, is very desirous to see you resume your performances. Therefore prepare for appearing to-morrow in *Ipermestra*. In the mean time, as they are waiting for me, I must run away. If you do not believe, you can take a turn through the city, and convince yourself that I have told you the truth."

"By all the furies!" exclaimed Anzoletto, "you have gained your point, but you have taken my life along with it."

And he swooned away on the Persian carpet of the false Corilla.

CHAPTER XXI.

OF all others the Count Zustiniani was the person most put out in his part by the flight of Consuelo. After having allowed it to be said and, indeed, induced all Venice to believe, that the wonderful new actress was his mistress, how was he to explain, in a manner tolerably satisfactory to his own self-love, the fact, that on his first word of declaration, she had abruptly and mysteriously evaded his hopes and desires? Some persons were of opinion that, jealous of his treasure, he had concealed her in one of his country houses. But when Porpora was heard to declare, with his wonted stern gravity, the part which his pupil had adopted—of going in advance of him into Germany—there was no more to be done, but to seek the causes of her singular resolution. The count, in order to divert men's minds, affected to be neither vexed nor surprised; but still his annoyance leaked out in spite of him, and the world ceased to attribute to him, in this instance, the success on which he so greatly prided himself. The greater part of the truth, in fact, soon became known to the public—to wit: Anzoletto's faithlessness, Corilla's rivalry, and the despair of the poor Spaniard, who was now warmly pitied and tenderly regretted. Anzoletto's first impulse was to hurry to Porpora; but he had met with the sternest repulses from him. "Cease questioning me, young ambitious fool, heartless and faithless that you are," replied the master, with noble indignation. "You never deserved that noble girl's affection, and never shall you learn of me what has become of her. I will exert all my cares to prevent you from ever getting on her traces; and I hope that, should you ever chance to meet her at some future day, her image will be effaced from your heart and memory, as completely as I hope and endeavor to effect that it shall be."

From the house of Porpora, Anzoletto had hastened to the Corte Minelli, where he found Consuelo's room occupied by a new tenant, who was already in possession,—and fitted up with the instrument—

and materials of his trade. He was a glass-worker, who had long dwelt in the same house, and was now gaily moving his workshop into his new premises.

"Ah, ha! so this is you, my boy?" he cried to the young tenor; "so you have come to see me in my new lodging? I shall do very well here, and my wife is delighted at having means to lodge her children here down stairs. What are you looking for? Has Consuelo forgotten anything? Look away, my boy, look away; you cannot disturb me."

"What have they done with her furniture?" asked Anzoletto, disturbed, and really cut to the heart at seeing no vestige more of Consuelo in this spot, consecrated to the only pure joys of his whole past existence.

"The furniture is down yonder in the court; she made a present of it to mother Agatha, and a good deed that was. The old woman is poor, and will make a little money out of it. Oh! Consuelo had a good heart. She has not left a farthing of debt in the court, and made every one a slight gift at her departure. She took nothing with her but her crucifix. It is strange, nevertheless, that she should have gone off in the dead of night without letting a soul know of it. Master Porpora came here this morning, and settled all her business; it was just like executing a will. All the neighbors were sorry for it, but after a while they all consoled themselves, knowing that she is gone to live in a fine palace on the Canalazzo, now that she has become rich and a great lady. For my part, I was always sure that she would make a fortune with her voice, she worked so hard. And when are you to be married, Anzoletto? I hope that you will buy some trifles of me to make presents to the girls of the neighborhood."

"Oh, surely, surely," answered Anzoletto, without knowing what he said; and he hurried away with hell in his heart, and saw all the beldames of the place bidding at auction in the court-yard for Consuelo's bed and table—that bed on which he had so often seen her sleep, that table at which she had sat so often! "Oh, my God! already not a sign left of her!" he cried, wringing his hands involuntarily, and he felt pretty well inclined to go and stab Corilla.

Three days afterwards he came upon the stage again with Corilla. They were hissed tremendously, one and the other, and the curtain fell amid a storm of censure, with the piece unfinished. Anzoletto was furious, and Corilla utterly unmoved. "Behold the worth of your protection to me," he cried, in threatening tones, as soon as he was again alone with her. The prima donna answered him with infinite composure—"You worry yourself about nothing, my child," said she; "it is not difficult to perceive that you know nothing about the world, and are unused to its caprices. I was so well prepared for this evening's reception, that I did not even give myself the trouble of going over my part; and the only reason why I did not warn you what was to come, is, that I knew you had not the courage to come upon the stage at all, with the certainty of being hissed. Now you must be made aware what we have to look for. The next time we shall be treated worse yet. Three, four, perhaps six or eight appearances of this kind will pass in succession. But, if we were the most wretched bunglers in the world, the spirit of independence and contradiction will raise up for us some zealous partisans. There are so many folks who think to elevate themselves by running down others, that there must needs be some who think to raise themselves by helping others

forward. After ten or a dozen contests, during which the theatre will be a battle field—half hissing, half applause—the opposition will get tired, our obstinate supporters will get sulky, and we shall enter upon a new state of affairs. That portion of the public which supported us, why, itself knew not, will listen to us very coldly; we shall have, as it were, a new debut; and then all is our own way, thank God! for we have but to fire the audience, and to remain masters of the field. I promise you great success from that moment, dear Anzoletto; the charm which weighed you down of late, is dissipated. You will breathe, thenceforth, an atmosphere of unmixed favor and sweet praises, and your powers will be restored straightways. Remember the effect of your first appearance at Zustiniani's; you had not then the time to establish yourself firmly on that victorious footing—a star, before which yours paled, culminated in the sky; but that star has, in its turn, been unsphered, and you may prepare yourself again with me to scale the empyrean."

All fell out to the letter, as Corilla foretold it. For, of a truth, the two lovers were made to pay very dearly for the first few days, for the loss the public had undergone in the person of Consuelo. But the hardihood which they exerted in braving the storm, lasted longer than the indignation, which was too lively to be durable. The count lent his encouragement to Corilla's efforts. As to Anzoletto,—not until he had made every exertion in vain, to attract a *primo uomo* to Venice at so advanced a season, when all the engagements have been made with all the principal theatres in Europe, did the count come to a decision, and receive him as his champion in the strife which was about to commence between his theatre and the public. The career and reputation of that theatre had been, by far too brilliant, that it should lose it with this or that performer. Nothing of the nature of the present contest was likely to affect the course of usages so long established. All the boxes had been hired for the season; and the ladies were in the habit of receiving their visits, and chatting in them as usual. The real amateurs of music were out of sorts for some time, but they were too few in number to produce any perceivable effect. Moreover, in the long run, they got bored by their own anger, and Corilla, having sung one evening with unwonted animation, was unanimously called for. She reappeared, drawing Anzoletto on the stage along with her, although he had not been recalled, appearing to yield to her gentle violence with modest timidity. In a word, before a month had elapsed, Consuelo, was forgotten like the lightning which flashes and vanishes along a summer sky. Corilla was the rage as much as ever, and perhaps deserved to be so more than ever; for emulation had given her an enthusiasm, and love an expression of sentiment which she had lacked before. As for Anzoletto, though he had got rid of no one of his faults, he had contrived to display all the unquestionable qualities which he did possess. His fine personal appearance captivated the women; ladies vied for his presence at evening parties, the more so that Corilla's jealousy added something piquant to the coquetries which were addressed to him. Clorinda, moreover, devolved all her theatrical resources, that is to say, her full blown beauty and the voluptuous nonchalance of her unexampled dulness, which was not without its attraction for spectators of a certain order. Zustiniani, in order to divert his mind from the real disappointment he had undergone, had made her his mistress, loaded her with diamonds, and thrust her forward into first parts, hoping to

fit her to succeed Corilla in that position, since she was definitively engaged at Paris for the following season.

Corilla regarded this rivalry, from which she had nothing whatever to apprehend, either present or future, without a touch of annoyance or of alarm; she even took a mischievous pleasure in displaying the coldly impudent incapacity of her rival, which was daunted by no difficulties.

In the full tide of his prosperity and success, (for the count had given him a very good engagement,) Anzoletto was weighed down by disgust and self-reproach, which prevented his enjoying his onerous good fortune. It was truly pitiful to see him dragging himself to rehearsals, linked to the arm of Corilla in her haughty triumph, pale, languid, handsome, as a man can be, ridiculously over-dressed, worn out like one overdone with adoration, fainting and unbraced among the laurels and the myrtles which he had so liberally and so indolently won. Even when upon the stage, when in the midst of a scena with his fiery mistress, he could not refrain from defying her by his haughty attitude and the superb languor of his impertinence. When she seemed to devour him with her eyes, he replied to the public by a glance, which appeared to say—"Fancy not that I respond to all this love! Far from it; he who shall rid me of it, shall serve me largely."

In real truth, Anzoletto, having been corrupted and spoiled by Corilla, poured out upon her those phials of selfishness and ingratitude, which she urged him to pour out against all the world beside. There was but one true, one pure sentiment which now remained in his heart; it was the indestructible love which he still cherished, in despite of all his vices, for Consuelo. He could divert his mind from it, thanks to his natural levity, but cure it he could not; and that love came back upon him as a remorse—as a torture—in the midst of his guilty excesses. Faithless to Corilla, given up to numberless intrigues—avenging himself to-day upon the count with Corilla, to-morrow amusing himself with some fashionable beauty—the third day with the lowest of their sex; passing from mystic appointments to open revelries, he seemed struggling to bury the past in the oblivion of the present. But in the midst of these disorders, a ghost seemed to haunt him; and sighs would burst from his breast, as he glided in his gondola at dead of night, with his debauched companions, beside the dark buildings of the Corte Minelli. Corilla, long since conquered by his cruel treatment, and inclined, as all base spirits are—to love the more in proportion as they are the more scorned and outraged—began herself to hate him, and to grow weary of her fatal passion.

One night as Anzoletto floated with Clorinda through the streets of Venice in his gondola, another gondola, shot by them rapidly—its extinguished lantern proving its clandestine errand. He scarcely heeded it; but Clorinda, who was ever on thorns from her fear of discovery, said to him—"Let us go slower; 'tis the count's gondola; I know his barcarole."

"Is it—Oh, then," cried Anzoletto, "I will overtake him, and find out what infidelity he is at to-night."

"No, no; let us go back," cried Clorinda. "His eye—his ear, is so quick. Do not let us intrude upon his leisure."

"On! I say, on!" cried Anzoletto to the gondolier; "I must overtake that gondola ahead of us."

Spite of all Clorinda's tears, all her entreaties, it was but a second ere the boats clasped together, and a burst of laughter from the other gon-

dola fell upon Anzoleto's ear. "Ah! this is fair war—it is Corilla enjoying the breeze with the count." As he spoke, Anzoleto jumped to the bow of his gondola, snatched the oar from his barcarole, and darting on the track of the other gondola, again grazed its side; and whether he heard his own name among Corilla's bursts of laughter, or whether he was indeed mad, he cried aloud, "Sweetest Clorinda, unquestionably, you are the loveliest and the dearest of your sex."

"I was just telling Corilla so," said the count, coming easily out of his cabin, and approaching the other barque. "And now as we have both brought our excursions to an end, we can make a fair exchange, as honest folks do of equally valuable merchandise."

"Count, you but do justice to my love of fair play," replied Anzoleto, in the same tone. "If he permit me, I will offer him my arm, that he may himself escort the fair Clorinda into his gondola."

The count reached out his arm to rest upon Anzoleto's; but the tenor, inflamed by hatred, and transported with rage, leaped with all his weight upon the count's gondola and upset it, crying with savage voice—"Signor count, *gondola for gondola!*" Then abandoning his victims to their fate, and leaving Clorinda speechless with terror and trembling for the consequences of his frantic conduct, he gained the opposite bank by swimming, took his course through the dark and tortuous streets, entered his lodging, changed his clothes in a twinkling, gathered together all the money he had, left the house, threw himself into the first shallop which was getting under way for Trieste, and snapped his fingers in triumph as he saw in the dawn of morning, the clock-towers and domes of Venice sink beneath the waves.

CHAPTER XXII.

IN the western range of the Carpathian mountains, which separates Bohemia from Bavaria, and which receives in these countries the name of the Boehmer Wald, there was still standing, about a century ago, an old country seat of immense extent, called, in consequence of some forgotten tradition, the Castle of the Giants.—Though presenting at a distance somewhat the appearance of an ancient fortress, it was no more than a private residence, furnished in the taste, then somewhat antiquated, but always rich and sumptuous, of Louis XIV. The feudal style of architecture had also undergone various tasteful modifications in the parts of the edifice occupied by the Lords of Rudolstadt, masters of this rich domain.

The family was of Bohemian origin, but had become naturalized in Germany, on its members changing their name, and abjuring the principles of the Reformation, at the most trying period of the Thirty Years' War. A noble and valiant ancestor, of inflexible Protestant principles, had been murdered on the mountain in the neighborhood of his castle, by the fanatic soldiery. His widow, who was of a Saxon family, saved the fortune and the life of her young children by declaring herself a Catholic, and entrusting to the Jesuits the education of the heirs of Rudolstadt. After two generations had passed away, Bohemia being silent and oppressed, the Austrian power permanently established, and the glory and misfortunes of the Reformation at last

apparently forgotten, the Lords of Rudolstadt peacefully practised the Christian virtues, professed the Romish faith, and dwelt on their estates in unostentatious state, like good aristocrats, and faithful servants of Maria Theresa. They had formerly displayed their bravery, in the service of their emperor, Charles VI; but it was strange that young Albert, the last of this illustrious and powerful race, and the only son of Count Christian Rudolstadt, had never borne arms in the War of Succession, which had just terminated; and that he had reached his thirtieth year without having sought any other distinction than what he inherited from his birth and fortune. This unusual course had inspired his sovereign with suspicion of collusion with her enemies; but Count Christian, having had the honor to receive the empress in his castle, had given such reasons for the conduct of his son as seemed to satisfy her. Nothing, however, had transpired of the conversation between Maria Theresa and Count Rudolstadt. A strange mystery reigned in the bosom of this devout and beneficent family, which for ten years a neighbor had seldom visited; which no business, no pleasure, no political agitation, induced to leave their domains; which paid largely and without a murmur all the subsidies required for the war, displaying no uneasiness in the midst of public danger and misfortune; which in fine seemed not to live after the same fashion as the other nobles, who viewed them with distrust, although knowing nothing of them but their praiseworthy deeds and noble conduct. At a loss to what to attribute this unsocial and retired mode of life, they accused the Rudolstadts sometimes of avarice, sometimes of misanthropy; but as their actions uniformly contradicted these imputations, their maligners were at length obliged to confine their reproaches to their apathy and indifference. They asserted that Count Christian did not wish to expose the life of his son—the last of his race—in these disastrous wars, and the empress had, in exchange for his services, accepted a sum of money sufficient to equip a regiment of hussars. The ladies of rank who had marriageable daughters admitted that Count Christian had done well; but when they learned the determination that he seemed to entertain of providing a wife for his son in his own family, in the daughter of the Baron Frederick, his brother—when they understood that the young Baroness Amelia had just quitted the convent at Prague, where she had been educated, to reside henceforth with her cousin in the Castle of the Giants—these noble dames unanimously pronounced the family of Rudolstadt to be a den of wolves, each of whom was more unsocial and savage than the others. A few devoted servants and faithful friends alone knew the secret of the family, and kept it strictly.

This noble family was assembled one evening round a table profusely loaded with game, and those substantial dishes with which our ancestors in Slavonic states still continued to regale themselves at that period, notwithstanding the refinements which the court of Louis XV. had introduced into the aristocratic customs of a great part of Europe. An immense hearth, on which burned huge billets of oak, diffused heat throughout the large and gloomy hall. Count Christian in a loud voice had just said grace, to which the other members of the family listened standing. Numerous aged and grave domestics, in the costume of the country—viz.: large mamaluke trousers, and long mustachios—moved slowly to and fro, in attendance on their honored masters. The chaplain of the castle was seated on the right of the count the young baroness on his left—"next his heart," as he was

went to say, with austere and paternal gallantry. The Baron Frederick, his junior brother, whom he always called his "*young brother*," from his being more than sixty years old, was seated opposite. The Canoness Wenceslawa of Rudolstadt, his eldest sister, a venerable lady of seventy, afflicted with an enormous hump, and a frightful leanness, took her place at the upper end of the table; while Count Albert, the son of Count Christian, the betrothed of Amelia, and the last of the Rudolstadts, came forward, pale and melancholy, to seat himself at the other end, opposite his noble aunt.

Of all these silent personages, Albert was certainly the one least disposed and least accustomed to impart animation to the others. The chaplain was so devoted to his masters, and so reverential towards the head of the family in particular, that he never opened his mouth to speak unless encouraged to do so by a look from Count Christian; and the latter was of so calm and reserved a disposition that he seldom required to seek from others a relief from his own thoughts.

Baron Frederick was of a less thoughtful character and more active temperament, but he was by no means remarkable for animation.—Although mild and benevolent as his eldest brother, he had less intelligence and less enthusiasm. His devotion was a matter of custom and politeness. His only passion was a love for the chase, in which he spent almost all his time, going out each morning and returning each evening, ruddy with exercise, out of breath, and hungry. He ate for ten, drank for thirty, and even showed some sparks of animation when relating how his dog Sapphire had started the hare, how Panther had unkenneled the wolf, or how his falcon Attila had taken flight; and when the company had listened to all this with inexhaustible patience, he dozed over quietly near the fire in a great black leathern arm-chair, and enjoyed his nap until his daughter came to warn him that the hour for retiring was about to strike.

The canoness was the most conversable of the party. She might even be called chatty, for she discussed with the chaplain, two or three times a week, for an hour at a stretch, sundry knotty points touching the genealogy of Bohemian, Hungarian, and Saxon families, the names and biographies of whom, from kings down to simple gentlemen, she had on her finger ends.

As for Count Albert, there was something repelling and solemn in his exterior, as if each of his gestures had been prophetic, each of his sentences oracular to the rest of the family.—By a singular peculiarity inexplicable to any one not acquainted with the secret of the mansion, as soon as he opened his lips, which did not happen once in twenty-four hours, the eyes of his friends and domestics were turned upon him; and there was apparent on every face a deep anxiety, a painful and affectionate solicitude; always excepting that of the young Amelia, who listened to him with a sort of ironical impatience, and who alone ventured to reply, with the gay or sarcastic familiarity which her fancy prompted.

This young girl, exquisitely fair, of a blooming complexion, lively, and well formed, was a little pearl of beauty; and when her waiting-maid told her so, in order to console her for her cheerless mode of life, "*Alas!*" the young girl would reply, "*I am a pearl shut up in an oyster, of which this frightful Castle of the Giants is the shell.*" This will serve to show the reader what sort of a petulant bird was shut up in so gloomy a cage.

On this evening the solemn silence which weighed down the family

particularly during the first course (for the two old gentlemen, the canoness, and the chaplain were possessed of a solidity and regularity of appetite which never failed), was interrupted by Count Albert.

"What frightful weather," said he, with a profound sigh.

Every one looked at him with surprise; for if the weather had become gloomy and threatening during the hour they had been shut up in the interior of the castle, nobody could have perceived it, since the thick shutters were closed. Everything was calm without and within, and nothing announced an approaching tempest.

Nobody, however, ventured to contradict Albert; and Amelia contented herself with shrugging her shoulders, while the clatter of knives and forks, and the removal of the dishes by the servants, proceeded, after a moment's interruption, as before.

"Do not you hear the wind roaring amid the pines of the Boehmer Wald, and the voice of the torrent sounding in your ears?" continued Albert, in a louder voice, and with a fixed gaze at his father.

Count Christian was silent. The baron, in his quiet way, replied, without removing his eyes from his venison, which he hewed with athletic hand, as if it had been a lump of granite; "yes, we had wind and rain together at sunset, and I should not be surprised were the weather to change to-morrow."

Albert smiled in his strange manner, and everything again became still; but five minutes had hardly elapsed when a furious blast shook the lofty casements, howled wildly around the old walls, lashing the waters of the moat as with a whip, and died away on the mountain tops with a sound so plaintive, that every face, with the exception of Count Albert's, who again smiled with the same indefinable expression, grew pale.

"At this very instant," said he, "the storm drives a stranger towards our castle. You would do well, Sir Chaplain, to pray for those who travel beneath the tempest, amid these rude mountains."

"I hourly pray from my very soul," replied the trembling chaplain, "for those who are cast on the rude paths of life amid the tempests of human passions."

"Do not reply, Mr. Chaplain," said Amelia, without regarding the looks or signs which warned her on every side not to continue the conversation. "You know very well that my cousin likes to torment people with his enigmas. For my part, I never think of finding them out."

Count Albert paid no more attention to the raileries of his cousin than she appeared to pay to his discourse. He leaned an elbow on his plate, which almost always remained empty and unused before him, and fixed his eyes on the damask table-cloth, as if making a calculation of the ornaments on the pattern, though all the while absorbed in a reverie.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A FURIOUS tempest raged during the supper, which meal lasted just two hours, neither more nor less, even on fast days, which were religiously observed, but which never prevented the count from indulging his customary habits, no less sacred to him than the usages of the Ro-

ish Church. Storms were too frequent in these mountains, and the immense forests which then covered their sides imparted to the echoes a character too well known to the inhabitants of the castle, to occasion them even a passing emotion. Nevertheless, the unusual agitation of Count Albert communicated itself to the rest of the family, and the baron, disturbed in the usual current of his reflections, might have evinced some dissatisfaction, had it been possible for his imper-turbable placidity to be for a moment ruffled. He contented himself with sighing deeply, when a frightful peal of thunder, occurring with the second remove, caused the carver to miss the choice morsel of boar's ham, which he was just then engaged in detaching.

"It cannot be helped," said the baron, directing a compassionating smile towards the poor carver, who was quite downcast with his mis-hap.

"Yes, uncle, you are right," exclaimed Count Albert, in a loud voice, and rising to his feet; "it cannot be helped. The Hussite is down; the lightning consumes it; Spring will revisit its foliage no more."

"What say you, my son?" asked the old count, in a melancholy tone. "Do you speak of the huge oak of the Schreckenstein?"*

"Yes, father; I speak of the great oak to whose branches we hung up some twenty monks the other day."

"He mistakes centuries for weeks just now," said the canoness in a low voice, while she made the sign of the cross. "My dear child," she continued, turning to her nephew, "if you have really seen what has happened, or what is about to happen, in a dream, as has more than once been the case, this miserable withered oak, considering the sad recollections associated with the rock it shaded, will be no great loss."

"As for me," exclaimed Amelia, "I am delighted that the storm has rid us of that gibbet, with its long, frightful skeleton arms, and its red trunk which seemed to ooze out blood. I never passed beneath it when the breeze of evening moved amid its foliage, without hearing sighs as if of agony, and commending my soul to God while I turned away and fled."

"Amelia," replied the count, who just now appeared to hear her words for the first time perhaps for days, "you did well not to remain beneath the Hussite as I did for hours, and even entire nights. You would have seen and heard things which would have chilled you with terror and never have left your memory."

"Pray, be silent," cried the young baroness, starting and moving from the table where Albert was leaning: "I cannot imagine what pleasure you take in terrifying others every time you open your lips."

"Would to Heaven, dear Amelia," said the old baron, mildly, "it were indeed but an amusement which your cousin takes in uttering such things."

"No, my father; I speak in all seriousness. The oak of the Stone of Terror is overthrown, cleft in pieces. You may send the wood-cutters to-morrow to remove it. I shall plant a cypress in its place, which I shall name, not the Hussite, but the Penitent, and the Stone of Terror shall be called the Stone of Expiation."

"Enough, enough, my son!" exclaimed the agonized old man. "Banish these melancholy images, and leave it to God to judge the actions of men."

* "Stone of Terror,"—a name not unfrequently used in these regions.

"They have disappeared, father—annihilated with the implements of torture which the breath of the storm and the fire of Heaven have scattered in the dust. In place of pendent skeletons, fruits and flowers rock themselves amid the zephyrs on the new branches; and in place of the man in black who nightly lit up the flames beside the stake, I see a pure celestial soul, which hovers over my head and yours. The storm is gone—the danger over; those who travelled are in shelter; my soul is in peace, the period of expiation draws nigh, and I am about to be born again."

"May what you say, O well-beloved child, prove true!" said Christian, with extreme tenderness; "and may you be freed from the phantoms which trouble your repose. Heaven grant me this blessing, and restore peace, and hope, and light to my son!"

Before the old man had finished speaking, Albert leaned forward, and appeared to fall into a tranquil slumber.

"What means this?" broke in the young baroness; "what do I see?—Albert sleeping at table? Very gallant, truly!"

"This deep and sudden sleep," said the chaplain, surveying the young man with intense interest, "is a favorable crisis, which leads me to look forward to a happy change, for a time at least, in his situation."

"Let no one speak to him, or attempt to arouse him," exclaimed Count Christian.

"Merciful Heaven," prayed the canoness, with clasped hands, "realize this prediction, and let his thirtieth year be that of his recovery!"

"Amen!" added the chaplain devoutly. "Let us raise our hearts with thanks to the God of Mercy for the food which he has given us, and entreat him to deliver this noble youth, the object of so much solicitude."

They rose for grace, and every one remained standing, absorbed in prayer, for the last of the Rudolstadts. As for the old count, tears streamed down his withered cheeks. He then gave orders to his faithful servants to convey his son to his apartment, when Baron Frederick, considering how he could best display his devotion towards his nephew, observed with childish satisfaction; "Dear brother, a good idea has occurred to me. If your son awakens in the seclusion of his chamber, while digestion is going on, bad dreams may assail him. Bring him to the saloon, and place him in my large arm-chair. It is the best one for sleeping in the whole house. He will be better there than in bed, and when he awakens he will find a good fire and friends to cheer his heart."

"You are right, brother," replied Christian, "let us bear him to the saloon and place him on the large sofa."

"It is wrong to sleep lying after dinner," continued the baron; "I believe, brother, that I am aware of that from experience. Let him have my arm-chair—yes, my arm-chair is the thing."

Christian very well knew that were he to refuse his brother's offer, it would vex and annoy him: the young count was therefore propped up in the hunter's leathern chair, but he remained quite insensible to the change, so sound was his sleep. The baron placed himself on another seat, and warming his legs before a fire worthy of the times of old, smiled with a triumphant air whenever the chaplain observed that Albert's repose would assuredly have happy results. The good soul proposed to give up his nap as well as his chair, and to join the

family in watching over the youth; but after some quarter of an hour he was so much at ease that he began to snore after so lusty a fashion as to drown the last faint and now far distant gusts of the storm.

The castle bell, which only rang on extraordinary occasions, was now heard, and old Hans, the head domestic, entered shortly afterwards with a letter, which he presented to Count Christian without saying a word. He then retired into an adjoining apartment to await his master's commands. Christian opened the letter, cast his eyes on the signature, and handed the paper to the young baroness, with a request that she would peruse the contents. Curious and excited, Amelia approached a candle, and read as follows:—

"ILLUSTRIOUS AND WELL-BELOVED LORD COUNT:—

"Your Excellency has conferred on me the favor of asking a service at my hands. This, indeed, is to confer a greater favor than all those which I have already received, and of which my heart fondly cherishes the remembrance. Despite my anxiety to execute your esteemed orders, I did not hope to find so promptly and so suitably the individual that was required; but favorable circumstances having concurred to an unforeseen extent in aiding me to fulfill the desires of your Highness, I hasten to send a young person who realizes at least in part, the required conditions. I therefore send her only provisionally, that your amiable and illustrious niece may not too impatiently await a more satisfactory termination to my researches and proceedings.

"The individual who has the honor to present this is my pupil, and in a measure my adopted child; she will prove, as the amiable baroness has desired, an agreeable and obliging companion, as well as a competent musical instructress. In other respects, she does not possess the necessary information for a governess. She speaks several languages, though hardly sufficiently acquainted with them perhaps to teach them. Music she knows thoroughly, and she sings remarkably well. You will be pleased with her talents, her voice, her demeanor, and not less so with the sweetness and dignity of her character. Your Highness may admit her into your circle without risk of her infringing in any way on etiquette, or affording any evidence of low tastes. She wishes to remain free as regards your noble family, and therefore will accept no salary. In short, it is neither as a duenna nor as a servant, but as companion and friend to the amiable baroness, that she appears: just as that lady did me the honor to mention in the gracious *post scriptum* which she added to your Excellency's communication.

"Signor Corner who has been appointed ambassador to Austria, awaits the orders for his departure; but these he thinks will not arrive before two months. Signora Corner, his worthy spouse and my generous pupil, would have me accompany them to Vienna, where she thinks I should enjoy a happier career. Without perhaps agreeing with her in this, I have acceded to her kind offers, desirous as I am to abandon Venice, where I have only experienced annoyance, deception, and reverses. I long to revisit the noble German land, where I have seen so many happy days, and renew my intimacy with the venerable friends, left there. Your Highness holds the first place in this old, worn-out, yet not wholly chilled heart, since it is actuated by eternal affection and deepest gratitude. To you, therefore, illustrious signor, do I commend and confide my adopted child, requesting

on her behalf hospitality, protection, and favor. She will repay your goodness by her zeal and attention to the young baroness. In three months I shall come for her, and offer in her place a teacher who may contract a more permanent engagement.

"Awaiting the day on which I may once more press the hand of one of the best of men, I presume to declare myself, with respect and pride, the most humble and devoted of the friends and servants of your Highness, chiarissima, stimatissima, illustrissima.

NICOLAS PORPORA.

*"Chapel Master, Composer, and Professor of Vocal Music
"VENICE, the — of — 17—."*

Amelia sprang up with joy on perusing this letter, while the old count, much affected, repeated—"Worthy Porpora! respectable man! excellent friend!"

"Certainly, certainly," exclaimed the Canoness Wenceslawa, divided between the dread of deranging their family usages and the desire of displaying the duties of hospitality towards a stranger, "we must receive and treat her well, provided she do not become weary of us here."

"But, uncle, where is this precious mistress and future friend?" exclaimed the young baroness, without attending to her aunt's reflections. "Surely she will shortly be here in person. I await her with impatience."

Count Christian rang. "Hans," said he, "by whom was this delivered?"

"By a lady, most gracious lord and master."

"Where is she?" exclaimed Amelia.

"In her post-carriage at the drawbridge."

"And you have left her to perish outside, instead of introducing her at once?"

"Yes, madam; I took the letter, but forbade the postilion to slacken rein or take foot out of the stirrup. I also raised the bridge behind me until I should have delivered the letter to my master."

"But it is unpardonable, absurd, to make guests wait outside in such weather. Would not any one think we were in a fortress, and that we take every one who comes for an enemy? Speed away then, Hans."

Hans remained motionless as a statue. His eyes alone expressed regret that he could not obey the wishes of his young mistress; but a cannon-ball whizzing past his ear would not have deranged by a hair's-breadth the impassive attitude with which he awaited the sovereign orders of his old master.

"The faithful Hans, my child," said the baron slowly, "knows nothing but his duty and the word of command. Now then, Hans, open the gates and lower the bridge. Let every one light torches and bid the stranger welcome."

Hans evinced no surprise in being ordered to usher the unknown into a house where the nearest and best friends were only admitted after tedious precautions. The canoness proceeded to give directions for supper. Amelia would have set out for the drawbridge; but her uncle, holding himself bound in honor to meet his guest there, offered his arm to his niece, and the impatient baroness was obliged to proceed majestically to the castle gate, where the wandering fugitive Consuelo had already alighted.

CHAPTER XXIV.

DURING the three months that had elapsed since the Baroness Amelia had taken it into her head to have a companion, less to instruct her than to solace her weariness, she had in fancy pictured to herself a hundred times the form and features of her future friend. Aware of Porpora's crusty humor, she feared he would send some severe and pedantic governess. She had therefore secretly written to him to say (as if her desires were not law to her doting relatives,) that she would receive no one past twenty-five. On reading Porpora's answer she was so transported with joy that she forthwith sketched in imagination a complete portrait of the young musician—the adopted child of the professor, young, and a Venetian—that is to say, in Amelia's eyes, made expressly for herself, and after her own image.

She was somewhat disconcerted, therefore when, instead of the blooming, saucy girl that her fancy had drawn, she beheld a pale, melancholy, and embarrassed young person; for, in addition to the profound grief with which her poor heart was overwhelmed, and the fatigue of a long and rapid journey, a fearful and almost fatal impression had been made on Consuelo's mind by the vast pine forest tossed by the tempest, the dark night illuminated at intervals by livid flashes of lightning, and, above all, by the aspect of this grim castle, to which the howlings of the baron's kennel and the light of the torches borne by the servants, lent a strange and ghastly effect. What a contrast with the *firmamento lucido* of Marcello—the harmonious silence of the nights at Venice—the confiding liberty of her former life, passed in the bosom of love and joyous poesy! When the carriage had slowly passed over the drawbridge, which sounded hollow under the horses' feet, and the portcullis fell with a startling clang, it seemed to her as if she had entered the portals of the "Inferno" of Dante; and, seized with terror, she recommended her soul to God.

Her countenance therefore showed the symptoms of extreme agitation when she presented herself before her hosts; and the aspect of Count Christian, his tall, wasted figure, worn at once by age and vexation, and dressed in his ancient costume, completed her dismay. She imagined she beheld the spectre of some ancient nobleman of the middle ages; and looking upon everything that surrounded her as a dream, she drew back, uttering an exclamation of terror.

The old count, attributing her hesitation and paleness to the jolting of the carriage and the fatigue of the journey, offered his arm to assist her in mounting the steps, endeavoring at the same time to utter some kind and polite expressions. But the worthy man, on whom Nature had bestowed a cold and reserved exterior, had become, during so long a period of absolute retirement, such a stranger to the usages and conventional courtesies of the world, that this timidity was redoubled; and under a grave and severe aspect he concealed the hesitation and confusion of a child. The obligation which he considered himself under to speak Italian, a language which he had formerly known tolerably well, but which he had almost forgotten, only added to his embarrassment; and he could merely stammer out a few words, which Consuelo heard with difficulty, and which she took for the unknown and mysterious language of the Shades.

Amelia, who had intended to throw herself upon Consuelo's neck,

and at once appropriate her to herself, had nothing to say—such is the reserve imparted, as if by contagion, even to the boldest natures, when the timidity of others seems to shun their advances.

Consuelo was introduced into the great hall where they had supped. The count, divided between the wish to do her honor and the fear of letting her see his son while buried in his morbid sleep, paused and hesitated; and Consuelo, trembling and feeling her knees give way under her, sank into the nearest seat.

“Uncle,” said Amelia, seeing the embarrassment of the count, “I think it would be better to receive the signora here. “It is warmer than in the great saloon, and she must be frozen by the wintry wind of our mountains. I am grieved to see her so overcome with fatigue, and I am sure that she requires a good supper and a sound sleep much more than our ceremonies. Is it not true, my dear signora?” added she, gaining courage enough to press gently with her plump and pretty fingers the powerless arm of Consuelo.

Her lively voice, and the German accent with which she pronounced her Italian, reassured Consuelo. She raised her eyes to the charming countenance of the young baroness, and, looks once exchanged, reserve and timidity were alike banished. The traveller understood immediately that this was her pupil, and that this enchanting face at least was not that of a spectre. She gratefully received all the attentions offered her by Amelia, approached the fire, allowed her cloak to be taken off, accepted the offer of supper, although she was not the least hungry; and, more and more reassured by the kindness of her young hostess, she found at length the faculties of seeing, hearing, and replying.

Whilst the domestics served supper, the conversation naturally turned on Porpora, and Consuelo was delighted to hear the old count speak of him as his friend, his equal—almost as his superior. Then they talked of Consuelo’s journey, the route by which she had come, and the storm which must have terrified her. “We are accustomed at Venice,” replied Consuelo, “to tempests still more sudden and perilous; for in our gondolas, in passing from one part of the city to another, we are often threatened with shipwreck even at our very thresholds. The water which serves us instead of paved streets, swells and foams like the waves of the sea, dashing our frail barks with such violence against the walls, that they are in danger of destruction before we have time to land. Nevertheless, although I have frequently witnessed such occurrences, and am not naturally very timid, I was more terrified this evening than I have ever been before, by the fall of a huge tree, uprooted by the tempest in the mountains and crashing across our path. The horses reared upright, while the postilion in terror exclaimed—‘It is the Tree of Misfortune!—it is the Hussite which has fallen!’ Can you explain what that means, *Signora Baronessa*?”

Neither the count nor Amelia attempted to reply to this question; they trembled while they looked at each other. “My son was not deceived,” said the old man. “Strange! strange in truth!”

And excited by his solicitude for Albert, he left the saloon to rejoin him, while Amelia, clasping her hands, murmured: “There is magic here, and the devil in presence bodily.”

These strange remarks re-awakened the superstitious feeling which Consuelo had experienced on entering the castle of Rudolstadt. The sudden paleness of Amelia, the solemn silence of the old servants in

their red liveries—whose square bulky figures and whose lack-lustre eyes, which their long servitude seemed to have deprived of all sense and expression, appeared each the counterpart of his neighbors—the immense hall wainscotted with black oak, whose gloom a chandelier loaded with lighted candles did not suffice to dissipate; the cries of the screech-owl, which had recommenced its flight round the castle, the storm being over; even the family portraits and the huge heads of stags and boars carved in relief on the wainscoting—all awakened emotions of a gloomy cast that she was unable to shake off. The observations of the young baroness were not very cheering. “My dear signora,” said she, hastening to assist her, “you must be prepared to meet here things strange, inexplicable, often unpleasant, sometimes even frightful; true scenes of romance which no one would believe if you related them, and on which you must pledge your honor to be silent forever.”

While the baroness was thus speaking the door opened slowly, and the Canoness Wenceslawa, with her hump, her angular figure, and severe attire, the effect of which was heightened by the decorations of her order which she never laid aside, entered the apartment with an air more affably majestic than she had ever worn since the period when the Empress Maria Theresa, returning from her expedition to Hungary, had conferred on the castle the unheard-of honor of taking there a glass of hippocras and an hour’s repose. She advanced towards Consuelo, and after a couple of courtesies and a harangue in German, which she had apparently learned by heart, proceeded to kiss her forehead. The poor girl, cold as marble, received what she considered a death salute, and murmured some inaudible reply.

When the canoness had returned to the saloon, for she saw that she rather frightened the stranger than otherwise, Amelia burst into laughter long and loud.

“By my faith,” said she to her companion, “I dare swear you thought you saw the ghost of Queen Libussa; but calm yourself; it is my aunt, and the best and most tiresome of women.”

Hardly had Consuelo recovered from this emotion when she heard the creaking of great Hungarian boots behind her. A heavy and measured step shook the floor, and a man with a face so massive, red, and square, that those of the servants appeared pale and aristocratic beside it, traversed the hall in profound silence, and went out by the great door which the valets respectfully opened for him. Fresh shuddering on Consuelo’s part, fresh laughter on Amelia’s followed.

“This,” said she, “is Baron Rudolstadt, the greatest hunter, the most unparalleled sleeper, and the best of fathers. His nap in the saloon is concluded. At nine he rises from his chair, without on that account awaking, walks across this hall without seeing or hearing anything, retires to rest, and wakes with the dawn, alert, active, vigorous as if he were still young, and bent on pursuing the chase anew with falcon, hound, and horse.”

Hardly had she concluded when the chaplain passed. He was stout, short, and pale as a dropsical patient. A life of meditation does not suit the dull Slavonian temperament, and the good man’s obesity was no criterion of robust health. He made a profound bow to the ladies, spoke in an under tone to a servant, and disappeared in the track of the baron. Forthwith old Hans and another of these automatons, which Consuelo could not distinguish, so closely did they resemble each other, took their way to the saloon. Consuelo, unable

any longer ever to appear to eat, followed them with her eyes. Hardly had they passed the door, when a new apparition, more striking than all the rest, presented itself at the threshold. It was a youth of lofty stature and admirable proportions, but with a countenance of corpse-like paleness. He was attired in black from head to foot, while a velvet cloak trimmed with sable and held by tassels and clasps of gold, hung from his shoulders. Hair of ebon blackness fell in disorder over his pale cheeks, which were further concealed by the curls of his glossy beard. He motioned away the servants who advanced to meet him, with an imperative gesture, before which they recoiled as if his gaze had fascinated them. Then he turned towards Count Christian, who followed him.

"I assure you, father," said he, in a sweet voice and winning accents, "that I have never felt so calm. Something great is accomplished in my destiny, and the peace of heaven has descended on our house."

"May God grant it, my child!" exclaimed the old man, extending his hand to bless him.

The youth bent his head reverently under the hand of his father; then raising it with a mild and sweet expression, he advanced to the centre of the hall, smiled faintly, while he slightly touched the hand which Amelia held out to him, and looked earnestly at Consuelo for some seconds. Struck with involuntary respect, Consuelo bowed to him with downcast eyes; but he did not return the salutation, and still continued to gaze on her.

"This is the young person," said the canoness in German "whom—." But the young man interrupted her with a gesture which seemed to say, "Do not speak to me—do not disturb my thoughts." Then slowly turning away, without testifying either surprise or interest, he deliberately retired by the great door.

"You must excuse him, my dear young lady," said the canoness; "he——"

"I beg pardon, aunt, for interrupting you," exclaimed Amelia; "but you are speaking German, which the signora does not understand."

"Pardon me, dear signora," replied Consuelo, in Italian; "I have spoken many languages in my childhood, for I have travelled a good deal. I remember enough of German to understand it perfectly. I dare not yet attempt to speak it, but if you will be so good as to give me some lessons, I hope to regain my knowledge of it in a few days."

"I feel just in the same position," replied the canoness, in German. "I comprehend all the young lady says, yet I could not speak her language. Since she understands me, I may tell her that I hope she will pardon my nephew the rudeness of which he has been guilty in not saluting her, when I inform her that this young man has been seriously ill, and that after his fainting fit he is so weak that probably he did not see her. Is not this so, brother?" asked the good Wenceslawa, trembling at the falsehood she had uttered, and seeking her pardon in the eyes of Count Christian.

"My dear sister," replied the old man, "it is generous in you to excuse my son. The signora, I trust, will not be too much surprised on learning certain particulars which we shall communicate to her tomorrow with all the confidence which we ought to feel for a child of Porpora, and I hope I may soon add, a friend of the family."

It was now the hour for retiring, and the habits of the establishment

were so uniform, that if the two young girls had remained much longer at table, the servants would doubtless have removed the chairs and extinguished the lights, just as if they had not been there. Besides, Consuelo longed to retire, and the baroness conducted her to the elegant and comfortable apartment which had been set apart for her accommodation.

"I should like to have an hour's chat with you," said she, as soon as the canoness, who had done the honors of the apartment, had left the room. "I long to make you acquainted with matters here, so as to enable you to put up with our eccentricities. But you are so tired that you must certainly wish, in preference, to repose.

"Do not let that prevent you, signora," replied Consuelo; "I am fatigued, it is true, but I feel so excited that I am sure I shall not close my eyes during the night. Therefore talk to me as much as you please, with this stipulation only, that it shall be in German. It will serve as a lesson for me; for I perceive that the Signor Count and the canoness as well, are not familiar with Italian."

"Let us make a bargain," said Amelia. "You shall go to bed to rest yourself a little, while I throw on a dressing-gown and dismiss my waiting-maid. I shall then return, seat myself by your bedside, and speak German so long as we can keep awake. Is it agreed?"

"With all my heart," replied Consuelo.

CHAPTER XXV.

"Know, then, my dear," said Amelia, when she had settled herself as aforesaid—"but now that I think of it, I do not know your name," she added, smiling. "It is time, however, to banish all ceremony between us; you will call me Amelia, what shall I call you—"

"I have a singular name, somewhat difficult to pronounce," replied Consuelo. "The excellent Porpora, when he sent me hither, requested me to assume his name, according to the custom which prevails among masters towards their favorite pupils. I share this privilege, therefore, with the great Huber, surnamed Porporina; but, in place of Porporina, please to call me simply Nina."

"Let it be Nina, then, between ourselves," said Amelia. "Now, listen, for I have a long story to tell you; and if I do not go back a little into the history of the past, you will never understand what took place in this house to-day."

"I am all attention," replied the new Porporina.

"Of course my dear Nina," said the young baroness, "you know something of the history of Bohemia."

"Alas!" replied Consuelo, "as my master must have informed you, I am very deficient in information. I know somewhat of the history of music, indeed; but as to that of Bohemia or any other country, I know nothing."

"In that case," replied Amelia, "I must tell you enough of it to render my story intelligible. Some three hundred years ago, the people among whom you find yourself, were great, heroic, and unconquerable. They had, indeed, strange masters, and a religion which they did not very well understand, but which their rulers wished to

impose by force. They were oppressed by hordes of monks while a cruel and abandoned king insulted their dignity, and crushed their sympathies. But a secret fury and deep-seated hatred fermented below; the storm broke out; the strangers were expelled; religion was reformed; convents were pillaged and razed to the ground, while the drunken Wenceslas was cast into prison, and deprived of his crown. The signal of the revolt had been the execution of John Huss and Jerome of Prague, two wise and courageous Bohemians, who wished to examine and throw light upon the mysteries of Catholicism, and whom a council cited, condemned, and burned, after having promised them safe conduct and freedom of discussion. This infamous treason was so grating to national honor, that a bloody war ravaged Bohemia, and a large portion of Germany, for many years. This exterminating war was called the war of the Hussites. Innumerable and dreadful crimes were committed on both sides. The manners of the times were fierce and cruel over the whole earth. Party spirit and religious fanaticism rendered them still more dreadful; and Bohemia was the terror of Europe. I shall not shock your imagination, already unfavorably impressed by the appearance of this savage country, by reciting the horrible scenes which then took place. On one side, it was nothing but murder, burnings, destructions; churches profaned, and monks and nuns mutilated, hung, and thrown into boiling pitch. On the other side, villages were destroyed, whole districts desolated, treasons, falsehoods, cruelties, abounded on every side. Hussites were cast by thousands into the mines, filling abysses with their dead bodies, and strewing the earth with their own bones and those of their enemies. These terrible Hussites were for a long time invincible; even yet their name is not mentioned without terror; and yet their patriotism, their intrepid constancy and incredible exploits, have bequeathed to us a secret feeling of pride and admiration, which young minds, such as mine, find it somewhat difficult to conceal."

"And why conceal it?" asked Consuelo, simply.

"It is because Bohemia has fallen back, after many struggles, under the yoke of slavery. Bohemia is no more, my poor Nina. Our masters were well aware that the religious liberty of our country was also its political freedom; therefore they have stifled both."

"See," replied Consuelo, "how ignorant I am! I never heard of these things before, and I did not dream that men could be so unhappy and so wicked."

"A hundred years after John Huss, another wise man, a new sectarian, a poor monk called Martin Luther, sprang up to awaken the national spirit, and to inspire Bohemia, and all the independent provinces of Germany, with hatred of a foreign yoke and revolt against popedom. The most powerful kings remained catholics, not so much for love of religion, as for love of absolute power. Austria united with them in order to overwhelm us, and a new war, called the Thirty Years' War, came to shake and destroy our national independence. From the commencement of this war, Bohemia was the prey of the strongest; Austria treated us as conquered; took from us our faith, our liberty, our language, and even our name. Our fathers resisted courageously, but the imperial yoke has weighed more and more heavily upon us. For the last hundred and twenty years, our nobility, ruined and decimated by exactions, wars, and torments, have been forced to expatriate themselves, or turn renegades by abjuring their origin, Germanising their names (pay attention to this), and renouncing the

liberty of professing their religious opinions. They have burned our books, destroyed our schools—in a word, made us Austrians. We are but a province of the empire, and you hear German spoken in a Slavonic state; that is saying enough.”

“And you now suffer and blush for this slavery? I understand you, and I already hate Austria with all my heart.”

“Oh! speak low,” exclaimed the young baroness. “No one can, without danger, speak thus under the black sky of Bohemia; and in this castle there is but one person, my dear Nina, who would have the boldness or the folly to say what you have just said: that is my cousin Albert.”

“Is this, then, the cause of the sorrow which is imprinted on his countenance? I felt an involuntary sensation of respect on looking at him.”

“Ah, my fair lioness of St. Mark,” said Amelia, surprised at the generous animation which suddenly lighted up the pale features of her companion; “you take matters too seriously. I fear that in a few days my poor cousin will inspire you rather with pity than with respect.”

“The one need not prevent the other,” replied Consuelo, “but explain yourself, my dear baroness.”

“Listen,” said Amelia; “we are a strictly Catholic family, faithful to church and state.—We bear a Saxon name, and our ancestors, on the Saxon side, were always rigidly orthodox. Should my aunt, the canoness, some day undertake to relate, unhappily for you, the services which the counts and German barons have rendered to the holy cause, you will find that, according to her, there is not the slightest stain of heresy on our escutcheon. Even when Saxony was protestant, the Rudolstadtts preferred to abandon their Protestant electors, rather than the communion of the Romish church. But my aunt takes care never to dilate on these things in presence of Count Albert; if it were not for that, you should hear the most astonishing things that ever human ears have listened to.”

“You excite my curiosity without gratifying it. I understand this much, that I should not appear before your noble relatives, to share your sympathy and that of Count Albert for old Bohemia. You may trust to my prudence, dear baroness; besides, I belong to a Catholic country, and the respect which I entertain for my religion, as well as that which I owe your family, would ensure my silence on every occasion.”

“It will be wise; for I warn you once again that we are terribly rigid upon that point. As to myself, dear Nina, I am a better compound—neither Protestant nor Catholic. I was educated by nuns, whose prayers and paternosters wearied me. The same weariness pursues me here, and my aunt Wenceslawa, in her own person, represents the pedantry and superstition of a whole community. But I am too much imbued with the spirit of the age, to throw myself, through contradiction, into the not less presumptuous controversies of the Lutherans: as for the Hussites, their history is so ancient that I have no more relish for it than for the glory of the Greeks and Romans. The French way of thinking is to my mind; and I do not believe there can be any other reason, philosophy, or civilization, than that which is practised in charming and delightful France, the writings of which I sometimes have a peep at in secret, and whose liberty, happiness, and pleasures, I behold from a distance, as in a dream, through the bars of my prison.”

"You each moment surprise me more," said Consuelo, innocently. "How does it come that just now you appeared full of heroism, in recalling the exploits of your ancient Bohemians? I believed you a Bohemian, and somewhat of a heretic."

"I am more than heretic, and more than Bohemian," replied Amelia, laughing; "I am the least thing in life incredulous altogether; I hate and denounce every kind of despotism, spiritual or temporal; in particular I protest against Austria, which of all old duennas is the most wrong-headed and devout."

"And is Count Albert likewise incredulous? Is he also imbued with French principles? In that case, you should suit each other wonderfully?"

"Oh, we are the farthest in the world from suiting each other, and now, after all these necessary preambles, is the proper time to speak of him."

"Count Christian, my uncle, was childless by his first wife. Married again at the age of forty, he had five girls, who as well as their mother all died young, stricken with the same malady—a continual pain, and a species of slow brain fever. This second wife was of pure Bohemian blood, and had besides great beauty and intelligence. I did not know her. You will see her portrait in the grand saloon, where she appears dressed in a bodice of precious stones and scarlet mantle. Albert resembles her wonderfully. He is the sixth and last of her children, the only one who has attained the age of thirty; and this not without difficulty; for without apparently being ill, he has experienced rude shocks and strange symptoms of disease of the brain, which still cause fear and dread as regards his life. Between ourselves, I do not think that he will long outlive this fatal period which his mother could not escape. Although born of a father already advanced in years, Albert is gifted with a strong constitution, but, as he himself says, the malady is in his soul, and has ever been increasing. From his earliest infancy, his mind was filled with strange and superstitious notions. When he was four years old, he frequently fancied he saw his mother beside his cradle, although she was dead, and he had seen her buried. In the night he used to awake and converse with her, which terrified my aunt Wenceslawa so much that she always made several women sleep in his chamber near the child, whilst the chaplain used I do not know how much holy water, and said masses by the dozen, to oblige the spectre to keep quiet. But it was of no avail, for the child, although he had not spoken of his apparitions for a long time, declared one day in confidence to his nurse, that he still saw his own dear mother; but he would not tell, because Mr. Chaplain had said wicked words in the chamber to prevent her coming back.

"He was a silent and serious child. They tried to amuse him; they overwhelmed him with toys and playthings, but these only served for a long time to make him more sad. At last they resolved not to oppose the taste which he displayed for study, and in effect this passion being satisfied, imparted more animation to him, but only served to change his calm and languishing melancholy into a strange excitement, mingled with paroxysms of grief, the cause of which it was impossible to foresee or avert. For example, when he saw the poor, he melted into tears, stripped himself of his little wealth, even reproaching himself that he had not more to give. If he saw a child beaten, or a peasant ill-used, he became so indignant that he would

swoon away, or fall into convulsions for hours together. All this displayed a noble disposition and a generous heart; but the best qualities, pushed to extremes, become defective or absurd. Reason was not developed in young Albert in proportion to feeling and imagination. The study of history excited without enlightening him. When he learned the crimes and injustice of men, he felt an emotion like that of the barbarian monarch, who, listening to the history of Christ's passion and death, exclaimed while he brandished his weapon, 'Ah! had I been there, I should have cut the wicked Jews into a thousand pieces!'

"Albert could not deal with man as they have been and are. He thought Heaven unjust in not having created them all kind and compassionate like himself; he did not perceive that from an excess of tenderness and virtue, he was on the point of becoming impious and misanthropic. He did not understand what he felt, and at eighteen was as unfit to live among men, and hold the place which his position demanded in society, as he was at six months old. If any person expressed in his presence a selfish thought, such as our poor world abounds with, and without which it could not exist, regardless of the rank of the person, or the feelings of the family towards him, he displayed immediately an invincible dislike to him, and nothing could induce him to make the least advance. He chose his society from among the most humble, and those most in disfavor with fortune and even nature. In the plays of his childhood he only amused himself with the children of the poor, and especially with those whose stupidity or infirmities had inspired all others with disgust or weariness. This strange inclination, as you will soon perceive, had not abandoned him.

"As in the midst of these eccentricities he displayed much intelligence, a good memory, and a taste for fine arts, and his father and his good aunt Wenceslaw, who tenderly cherished him, had no cause to blush for him in society. They ascribed his peculiarities to his rustic habits; and when he was inclined to go too far, they took care to hide them under some pretext or other from those who might be offended by them. But in spite of his admirable qualities and happy dispositions, the count and the canoness saw with terror this independent, and in many respects insensible nature, reject more and more the laws of polite society and the amenities and usages of the world."

"But as far as you have gone," interrupted Consuelo, "I see nothing of the unreasonableness of which you speak."

"Oh," replied Amelia, "that is because you are yourself, so far as I can see, of an open and generous disposition. But perhaps you are tired of my chatter, and would wish to sleep?"

"Not at all, my dear Baroness," replied Consuelo. "I entreat you to continue."

Amelia resumed her narrative in these words.

CHAPTER XXVI.

"You say, dear Nina, that hitherto you discover nothing extravagant in the actions or manner of my poor cousin. I am about to give you better proofs of it. My uncle and aunt are without doubt the best Christians and the most charitable souls in the world. They liberally dispense alms to all around them, and it would be impossible to display less pomp or pride in the use of riches than do these worthy relatives of mine. Well, my cousin made the discovery that their manner of living was altogether opposed to the spirit of the Gospel. He wished that, after the example of the early Christians, they should sell all they had, and become beggars, after having distributed the proceeds among the poor. If, restrained by the respect and love which he bore them, he did not exactly use words to this effect, he showed plainly what he thought, in bitterly deploring the lot of the poor, who are only born to toil and suffer, whilst the rich live in luxury and idleness. When he had given away in charity all his pocket-money, it was in his estimation but as a drop of water in the sea, and he demanded yet larger sums, which they dared not refuse him, and which flowed through his hands as water. He has given so much that you will no longer see a poor person in all the country which surrounds us, and I must add that we find our position nothing the better for it; inasmuch as the wants and demands of the lower orders increase in proportion to the concessions made to them, and our good peasants, formerly so mild and humble, begin to give themselves airs, thanks to the prodigality and fine speeches of their young master. If we had not the power of the imperial government to rely upon, which affords us protection on one hand, while it oppresses us on the other, I believe that, more especially since the succession of the Emperor Charles, our estates and castles might have been pillaged twenty times over by the bands of war-famished peasants which the inexhaustible benevolence of Albert, celebrated for thirty leagues round, has brought upon our backs.

"When Count Christian attempted to remonstrate with young Albert, telling him that to give all in one day was to deprive us of the means of giving any the next, 'Why, my beloved father,' he replied, 'have we not a roof to shelter us which will last longer than ourselves, whilst thousands of unfortunates have only the cold and inclement sky above their heads? Have we not each more clothes than would suffice for one of these ragged and shivering families? Do I not see daily upon our table more meats and good Hungarian wine than would suffice to refresh and comfort these poor beggars, exhausted with fatigue and hunger? Have we a right to refuse when we have so much more than we require? Are we even permitted to use what is necessary whilst others are in want? Has the law of Christ changed?'

"What reply could the count, the canoness and the chaplain, who had educated this young man in the austere principles of religion, make to these fine words? They were accordingly embarrassed when they found him take matters thus literally, and hold no terms with those existing arrangements on which, as it appears to me, is founded the whole structure of society.

"When these affectionate and sensible parents perceived that he

was in full train to dissipate his patrimony within a few years, and to get himself immured in a prison, as a rebel to the holy church and holy empire, they at last adopted, but not without much pain, the device of sending him to travel, hoping that when he should come to mix with men, and to observe the fundamental laws, which are nearly identical in every part of the civilized world, he would become habituated to live like other people. They committed him therefore to the charge of a crafty Jesuit, a man of the world, and a man of intellect, if ever there was one, who comprehended his part at half a word, and conscientiously undertook to perform all that they dared not ask of him in direct words. To speak plainly it was judged necessary to corrupt and tame his wild spirit, and to fashion it to the yoke of social life, by infusing into it, drop by drop, the fascinating, yet necessary, poisons of ambition, of vanity, of indifference to all matters, religious, moral, or political. Do not frown so, as you listen to me, my dear Porporina. My worthy uncle is a good and simple-minded person, who has always, from his youth upwards, received all these things precisely as they were set before his mind, and who has had the good fortune through his whole life to reconcile toleration with religion, and that without hypocrisy or over-deep scrutiny. In a century and a state of society like ours, in which but one such man as Albert is found among millions such as we, he who keeps pace with the world and its progress is the wise man; he who would recede two thousand years into the past, merely scandalises his fellows, and makes not a single convert.

"For eight successive years Albert travelled in Italy, France, England, Prussia, Poland, Russia, nay, even among the Turks. He returned home through Hungary, Southern Germany, and Bavaria. He conducted himself with perfect prudence during his travels, not spending anything above the liberal allowance which his relatives had assigned to him, writing them very gentle and affectionate letters, in which he never alluded to anything beyond the things which had actually fallen under his eyes, and without making any deep observations on any matter whatever, or giving his tutor reason to reproach him either with offence or ingratitude.

"On his return hither, at the beginning of the last year, after the first embraces of his family, he withdrew himself, they say, entered the room in which his mother died, remained shut up there for several hours, and then came forth alone, all pale and haggard, to wander alone on the mountain.

"During this time the abbe spoke in confidence with the Canoness Wenceslawa, and with the chaplain, who had required of him a full and sincere relation of the condition, moral and physical, of the young count. 'Count Albert,' said he to them, 'whether he has been changed in character in the course of his travels, or whether I had formed a false impression of him from the description which you gave me of his childhood, has behaved towards me from the first hour of our acquaintance precisely as you see him to-day—gentle, calm, long-suffering, patient, and exquisitely polite. This excellent conduct on his part has never varied for a single instant, and I should be the most unjust of men, could I devise a complaint of any kind against him. Nothing of those things which I apprehended, nothing of ill-regulated expenses, of rude habits, of wild declamations, of enthusiastic asceticism, have occurred. He has never once asked me to allow him to administer himself the little fortune with which you

charged me for his uses, and never once expressed the slightest dissatisfaction at my application of it. It is true that I always took care to anticipate his wishes, and if a beggar approached the carriage I made haste to send him away perfectly satisfied, almost before he had time to stretch out his hand. This mode of acting appears to have succeeded perfectly, and as his lordship was never again saddened by the contemplation of misery, his ancient prejudices on that subject apparently ceased to trouble him. I have never heard him scold or blame any person, or express an unfavorable opinion on any institution. That ardent devotion, the very excess and extravagance of which alarmed you, made way for a regularity of conduct, and for practices entirely becoming a man of the world. He was present in the most brilliant courts, and participated in the noblest entertainments without manifesting either enthusiasm or disgust for anything. Everywhere his fine face, his handsome carriage, his unemphatic politeness, and the good taste which always guided his conversation, were subjects of remark and approbation. His morals have remained ever as pure as those of a perfectly well-conducted girl, without ever declining into prudery or bad taste. He visited theatres, nunneries, monuments, conversed soberly and judiciously of the fine arts. In a word, I cannot conceive in what respect he can have caused your lordship and ladyship any uneasiness, never having, for my part, seen a gentleman more perfectly reasonable. If there be anything extraordinary about him, it is precisely this moderation, prudence, and self-possession—this absence of all the excitements and passions, such as I have never met in any other young man, so advantageously circumstanced by nature, birth, and fortune.

"This, moreover, was but the natural confirmation of the frequent letters which the abbe had written to the family, but in which they had always apprehended some exaggeration on his part, so that they were, in fact, never perfectly reassured until at the moment when he affirmed the complete cure of my cousin, without seeming to fear that his conduct before the eyes of his parents would belie his asseveration. The abbe was overloaded with gifts and caresses, and the return of Albert from his walk was eagerly expected. His absence was long, and when at length he returned, just as they were about to sit down to supper, he was so pale, and the gravity of his countenance was so remarkable, that all were struck by it. In the first moment of his affectionate pleasure, on his return, his features had expressed a calm and settled satisfaction, which had already vanished. All were astonished, and questioned the abbe in whispers concerning the change. He looked at Albert, and then turning with some surprise to those who were questioning him, in a corner of the apartment—"I see nothing unusual," he said, "in the expression of Monsieur le Comte. This is the calm and peaceful aspect which he has ever worn during the eight years that I have had the honor of accompanying him."

"Count Christian seemed content with this answer. 'When we last saw him,' said he to his sister, 'he was still bedecked with all the florid beauty of youth, and was sometimes, alas! fired by some touch of internal fear, which kindled his cheeks and fired his eyes. He has now returned to us emboldened by the sun of southern climes, a little aged, perhaps, by fatigue, and a little touched with that gravity which so well becomes a finished and mature man. Do you not think, my dear sister, that, after all, he is better so?'

"I think his expression is very sad under the mask of this gravity,

answered my excellent aunt, 'and I have never seen a man of twenty-eight so phlegmatical, and so little given to conversation. He only replies to us in monosyllables.'

"Monsieur the count has always been very sparing of his words," answered the abbe.

"Such was not his habit formerly," said the canoness, 'if he had his weeks of silence and meditation, he had likewise his days of expansiveness, and his hours of eloquence.'

"I have never seen him," resumed the abbe, 'to vary from the reserve which your lordships notice in him at this moment.'

"Were you then better satisfied with his demeanor when he talked too much, and too wildly, and used expressions which made us all tremble?" said Count Christian to his frightened sister; 'of a truth this is the very way with women.'

"But he at least existed then," she replied; 'now he resembles the inhabitant of some other sphere, who takes no interest in the affairs of this world.'

"That is the constant and enduring character of the count," said the abbe, 'he is a man entirely concentrated within himself—who imparts none of his impulses to any one—and who, if I must speak out exactly what I think, is very slightly affected by any impressions from things external. Such is the case with many cold, sensible, and reflective persons; he is so constituted, and I am of opinion that by endeavoring to excite him, the only result would be to disturb and confuse a mind disinclined to action and to every perilous exertion.'

"Oh, I could swear that this is not his true and natural character," said the canoness.

"I have little doubt, however," returned the priest, 'that madame the canoness will see cause to overcome the prejudices she seems to have formed against so rare an advantage.'

"Indeed, my sister," said the count, 'I think that monsieur the abbe speaks very wisely. Has he not brought about, by his care and condescension, the result which we have so earnestly desired? Has he not turned aside the calamities which we dreaded? Albert gave us every token of turning out a prodigy, an enthusiast, a rash-headed visionary. He comes back to us just such as we ought to desire him to be, in order to command the esteem, the confidence, and the consideration of his equals.'

"But as lifeless as an old volume!" cried the canoness; 'or perhaps hardened to everything or disdaining everything which does not answer to his hidden instincts. He does not even seem glad to see us, who awaited his return with such impatience.'

"Monsieur le Comte was himself impatient to return," said the abbe; 'I saw it clearly enough, though he did not manifest it openly. He is by no means of a demonstrative character. Nature framed him of a reserved temper.'

"On the contrary," she exclaimed, 'nature framed him demonstrative. Sometimes, indeed, he was tender, sometimes he was violent, even to excess. He often vexed, but then again he would cast himself into my arms, and I was at once disarmed.'

"To me he has never been guilty of aught for which to make a reparation.'

"Believe me, sister, things are much better as they now are.'

"Alas!" said the canoness, 'and will he always wear that calm and constrained face, which chills my very soul?'

"It is the proud and noble face which becomes a man of his rank," replied the abbe.

"It is a face of marble!" cried the canoness. "When I look at him I think I see my mother, not as I knew her, warm, sympathizing and benevolent, but as they have painted her, motionless, and icy cold, in her frame of black oak."

"I repeat to your ladyship, that for eight years, Count Albert has worn no other than that one habitual expression."

"Alas! and it is then eight years since he has smiled on any person?" said the good aunt, unable any longer to restrain her tears. "For during two whole hours which I have spent in gazing on him, not the slightest symptom of a smile has animated his wan, set lips! Oh! I feel inclined to spring upon him, and clasp him to my heart, as of old, reproaching him with his indifference, and blaming him, as I was wont, in order to see whether he will not, as he used, cling to my neck and sob forth his affection."

"Beware of committing any such imprudence, my dear sister," said Count Christian, compelling her to turn away her eyes from Count Albert, whom she still gazed at through her tears. "Listen not to the weakness of a maternal heart. Surely we know but too well that an excessive sensibility has been the scourge of our beloved son's life and reason. By diverting his thoughts, and removing from him all over-violent emotions, monsieur the abbe, in conformity with our advice, and with the recommendations of his physicians, has succeeded in calming his agitated soul. Do not then undo all that he has done, by yielding to the whims of a childish affection."

"The canoness yielded to his reasoning, and endeavored to habituate herself to the icy exterior of Count Albert, but she could by no means accustom herself to it, and she often whispered in her brother's ear, 'you may say as you will, Christian, but I fear that they have rendered him idiotic, by treating him, not as a man, but a peevish infant.'"

"In the evening, when they were parting for the night, they all embraced. Albert received his father's blessing with deep affection, and when the canoness pressed him to her bosom, he perceived that she was trembling, and that her voice faltered perceptibly. Then he began to tremble likewise, and tore himself from her arms as if a keen pang had shot through him. 'You see, sister,' whispered the count in her ear, 'he is no longer used to encounter such emotions, and you are only giving him pain.' At the same time, scarcely satisfied with his own argument, he watched him narrowly, by no means free himself from emotion, in order to discover if, by his conduct toward the abbe, he manifested any particular predilection for that person; but Albert merely bowed to his tutor, with distant and reserved politeness."

"My son," said the count, "I believe that I have fulfilled your intentions, and satisfied the desires of your heart, in requesting monsieur the abbe not to leave you, as he had expressed some idea of doing, and in prevailing on him to remain with us as long as possible. I would not have your happiness at rejoining our family embittered to you by a single regret, and I trust that your worthy friend will assist us in procuring you this unmingled happiness."

"Albert replied only by a low bow, and at the same moment strange smile quivered across his lips."

"Alas!" cried the canoness, as he withdrew, "is that the fashion of his smile now?"

CHAPTER XXVII.

"DURING Albert's absence, the count and the canoness had formed innumerable projects for the future welfare of their dear child, among which that of marrying him occupied a prominent place. With his fine face, his noble birth, and his fortune still unimpaired, Albert could have aspired to a connection with the noblest families in the kingdom. But in case his indolence, and shy, retiring disposition should make him unwilling to bring himself forward, and push his fortune in the world, they kept in reserve for him a young person of equally high birth with himself, since she was his cousin-germain, and bore the same name; she was not so rich, indeed, but was young, handsome, and an only daughter. This young person was Amelia, baroness of Rudolstadt, your humble servant and new friend.

"She," said they, when conversing together, by the fireside, 'has as yet seen nobody. She cannot hope for a better match; and as to the eccentricities of her cousin, the old associations of their childhood, the ties of relationship, and a few months' intimacy with us, will go far to overcome her repugnance to them, and bring her round to tolerate, were it only for the sake of family feeling, what might be unendurable to a stranger.' They were sure of the consent of my father, who never had any will but that of his elder brother and his sister Wenceslawa; and who, to say the truth, has never had a will of his own.

"When, after a fortnight's careful observation of his manners, the constant melancholy and reserve, which appeared to be the confirmed character of my cousin, became evident to them, my uncle and aunt concluded, that the last scion of their race was not destined to win renown by great or noble deeds. He displayed no inclination for a bright career in arms, diplomacy, or civil affairs. To every proposal he mildly replied that he should obey the wishes of his relations, but that for his own part he desired neither luxury nor glory. After all, this indolent disposition was but an exaggerated copy of his father's, a man of such calm and easy temperament, that his imperturbability borders on apathy, and his modesty is a kind of self-denial. What gives to my uncle's character a tone which is wanting in his son's, is his strong sense, devoid of pride, of the duties he owes to society. Albert seemed formerly to understand domestic duties, but public ones, as they were regarded by others, concerned him no more than in his childhood. His father and mine had followed the career of arms under Montecuculi against Turenne. They had borne with them into the war a kind of religious enthusiasm, inspired by the Emperor. A blind obedience to their superiors was considered the duty of their time. This more enlightened age, however, strips the monarch of his false halo, and the rising generation believe no more in the divine right of the crown than in that of the tiara. When my uncle endeavored to stir up in his son's bosom the flame of ancient chivalric ardor, he soon perceived that his arguments had no meaning for a reasoner who looked on such things with contempt.

"Since it is thus," my uncle observed to my aunt, 'we will not thwart him. Let us not counteract this melancholy remedy, which has at least restored to us a passionless, in place of an impetuous man. Let his life, in accordance with his desire, be tranquil, and he may be

come studious, and philosophic as were many of his ancestors, an ardent lover of the chase like our brother Frederick, or a just and beneficent master, as we ourselves try to be. Let him lead from henceforward the untroubled and inoffensive life of an old man; he will be the first Rudolstadt whose life shall have known no youth. But as he must not be the last of his race, let us marry him, so that the heir of our name may fill up this blank in the glory of our house. Who knows but it may be the will of Providence that the generous blood of his ancestors now sleeps in his veins only to reawaken with a fresh impulse in those of his descendants?’

“So it was decided that they should break the ice on this delicate subject to my cousin Albert.

“They at first approached it gently; but as they found this proposal quite as unpalatable as all previous ones had been, it became necessary to reason seriously with him. He pleaded bashfulness, timidity, and awkwardness in female society.

“‘Certainly,’ said my aunt, ‘in my young days I would have considered a lover so grave as Albert more repulsive than otherwise; and I would not have exchanged my hump for his conversation.’

“‘We must then,’ said my uncle, ‘fall back upon our last resource, and persuade him to marry Amelia. He has known her from infancy, looks upon her as a sister, and will be less timid with her; and, as to firmness of character she unites animation and cheerfulness, she will by her good-humor dissipate those gloomy moods into which he so frequently relapses.’

“Albert did not condemn this project, and, without openly saying so, consented to see and become acquainted with me. It was agreed that I should not be informed of the plan, in order to save me the mortification of being rejected, which was always possible on his part. They wrote to my father, and as soon as they had secured his consent, they took steps to obtain the dispensation from the Pope which our consanguinity rendered necessary. At the same time my father took me from the convent, and one fine morning we arrived at the Castle of the Giants—I very well pleased to breathe the fresh air, and impatient to see my betrothed; my good father full of hope, and fancying that he had ingeniously concealed from me a project which he had unconsciously betrayed in every sentence he uttered in the course of the journey.

“The first thing that struck me in Albert was his fine figure and noble air. I confess, dear Nina, that my heart beat almost audibly when he kissed my hand, and that for some days I was charmed by his look, and delighted by the most trifling word that fell from his lips. His serious, thoughtful manner was not displeasing to me. He seemed to feel no constraint in my society; on the contrary, he was unreserved as in the days of childhood; and when, from a dread of failing in politeness, he wished to restrain his attention, our parents urged him to continue his ancient familiarity with me. My cheerfulness sometimes caused him to smile involuntarily, and my good aunt, transported with joy, attributed to me the honor of this improvement which she believed would be permanent. At length he came to treat me with the mildness and gentleness one displays towards a child, and I was content—satisfied that he would shortly pay more attention to my little animated countenance, and to the handsome dresses by which I studied to please him. But I had soon the mortification to discover that he cared little for the one, and that he did not even ap-

pear to see the other. One day my good aunt wished to direct his attention to a beautiful blue dress, which suited my figure admirably. Would you believe it?—he declared its color to be a bright red! His tutor, the abbe, who had honied compliments ever ready on his lips, and who wished to give his pupil a lesson in gallantry, insinuated that he could easily guess why Count Albert could not distinguish the color of my dress. Here was a capital opportunity for Albert to address to me some flattering remarks on the rose of my cheeks or the golden hue of my hair. He contented himself, however, with drily telling the abbe that he was as capable of distinguishing colors as he was, and with repeating his assertion that my robe was red as blood. I do not know why this rudeness of manner and eccentricity of expression made me shudder. I looked at Albert, and his glance terrified me. From that day I began to fear him more than I loved him. In a short time I ceased to love him at all, and now I neither love nor fear him: I merely pity him. You will by degrees understand why.

"The next day we were to go to Tauss, the nearest village, to make some purchases. I had promised myself much pleasure from this excursion, as Albert was to accompany me on horseback. When ready to set out, I of course expected that he would offer me his arm. The carriages were in the court, but he did not make his appearance, although his servant said that he had knocked at his door at the usual hour. They sent again to see if he were getting ready. Albert always dressed by himself, and never permitted a servant to enter his chamber until he had quitted it. They knocked in vain; there was no reply. His father, becoming uneasy at this continued silence, went himself to the room, but he could neither open the door, which was bolted inside, nor obtain a reply to his questions. They began to be frightened, when the abbe observed in his usual placid manner, that Count Albert was subject to long fits of sleep, which might almost be termed trances, and if suddenly awakened, he was agitated, and apparently suffered for many days, as from a shock. 'But that is a disease,' said the canoness, anxiously.

"'I do not think so,' said the abbe. 'He has never complained of anything. The physicians whom I brought to see him when he lay in this state, found no feverish symptoms, and attributed his condition to excess of application to study; and they earnestly advised that this apparently necessary repose and entire forgetfulness should not be counteracted by any mode of treatment.'

"'And is it frequent?' asked my uncle.

"'I have observed it only five or six times during eight years; and not having annoyed him by my attentions, I have never found any unpleasant consequences.'

"'And do these last long?' I demanded in my turn, very impatiently.

"'Longer or shorter, according to the want of rest which precedes or occasions these attacks; but no one can know, for the count either does not himself recollect the cause, or does not wish to tell it. He is extremely studious, and conceals it with unusual modesty.'

"'He is very learned then?' I replied.

"'Extremely learned.'

"'And he never displays it?'

"'He makes a secret of it—nay, does not himself suspect it.'

"'Of what use is it, in that case?'

"'Genius is like beauty,' replied this Jesuit courtier, casting a soft

look upon me; 'both are favors of Heaven which occasion neither pride nor agitation to those who enjoy them.'

"I understood the lesson, and only felt the more annoyed, as you may suppose. They resolved to defer the drive until my cousin should awake; but when at the end of two hours I saw that he did not stir, I laid aside my rich riding-dress, and set myself to my embroidery, not without spoiling a good deal of silk and missing many stitches. I was indignant at the neglect of Albert, who over his books in the evening had forgotten his promised ride with me, and who had now left me to wait, in no very pleasant humor, while he quietly enjoyed his sleep. The day wore on, and we were obliged to give up our proposed excursion. My father, confiding in the assurance of the abbe, took his gun, and strolled out to kill a few hares. My aunt, who had less faith in the good man's opinion, went up stairs more than twenty times to listen at her nephew's door, but without being able to hear the faintest breathing. The poor woman was in an agony of distress. As for my uncle, he took a book of devotion, to try its effect in calming his inquietude, and began to read in a corner of the saloon with a resignation so provoking that it half tempted me to leap out of the window with chagrin. At length towards evening, my aunt, overjoyed, came in to inform us that she had heard Albert rise and dress himself. The abbe advised us to appear neither surprised nor uneasy, not to ask the count any questions, and to endeavor to divert his mind and his thoughts, if he evinced any signs of mortification at what had occurred.

"But if my cousin be not ill, then he is mad!" exclaimed I, with some degree of irritation.

"I observed my uncle change countenance at this harsh expression, and I was struck with sudden remorse. But when Albert entered without apologizing to any one, and without even appearing to be aware of our disappointment, I confess I was excessively piqued and gave him a very cold reception, of which, however, absorbed as he was in thought, he took not the slightest notice.

"In the evening, my father fancied that a little music would raise his spirits. I had not yet sung before Albert, as my harp had only arrived the preceding evening. I must not, my scientific Porporina, boast of my musical acquirements before you; but you will admit that I have a good voice, and do not want natural taste. I allowed them to press me, for I had at the moment more inclination to cry than to sing, but Albert offered not a word to draw me out. At last I yielded, but I sang badly, and Albert, as if I had tortured his ears, had the rudeness to leave the room after I had gone through a few bars. I was compelled to summon all my pride to my assistance to prevent me from bursting into tears, and to enable me to finish the air without breaking the strings of my harp. My aunt followed her nephew: my father was asleep; my uncle waited near the door till his sister should return, to tell him something of his son. The abbe alone remained to pay me compliments, which irritated me yet more than the indifference of the others. 'It seems,' said I to him, 'that my cousin does not like music.'

"'On the contrary, he likes it very much,' replied he, 'but it is according—'

"'According to the manner in which one performs,' said I, interrupting him.

"'Yes,' replied he, a no wise disconcerted, 'and to the state of

his mind. Sometimes music does him good, sometimes harm. You have, I am certain, agitated him so much that he feared he should not be able to restrain his emotion. This retreat is more flattering to you than the most elaborate praise.'

"The compliments of this Jesuit had in them something so sinister and sarcastic that it made me detest him. But I was soon freed from his annoyance, as you shall presently learn.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"ON the following day, my aunt, who never speaks unless strongly moved, took it into her head to begin a conversation with the abbe and the chaplain, and as, with the exception of her family affections which entirely absorb her, she is incapable of conversing on any topic but that of family honor, she was ere long deep in a dissertation on her favorite subject, genealogy, and laboring to convince the two priests that our race was the purest and the most illustrious, as well as the most noble, of all the families of Germany, on the female side particularly. The abbe listened with patience, the chaplain with profound respect, when Albert, who apparently had taken no interest in the old lady's disquisition, all at once interrupted her.

"'It would seem, my dear aunt,' said he, 'that you are laboring under some hallucination as to the superiority of our family. It is true that their titles and nobility are of sufficient antiquity, but a family which loses its name, abjures it in some sort, in order to assume that of a woman of foreign race and religion, gives up its right to be considered ancient in virtue, and faithful to the glory of its country.'

"This remark somewhat disconcerted the canoness, but as the abbe had appeared to lend profound attention to it, she thought it incumbent on her to reply.

"'I am not of your opinion, dear child,' said she; 'we have often seen illustrious houses render themselves still more so, and with reason, by uniting to their name that of a maternal branch, in order not to deprive their heirs of the honor of being descended from a woman so illustriously connected.'

"'But this is a case to which that rule does not apply,' answered Albert, with a pertinacity for which he was not remarkable. 'I can conceive the alliance of two illustrious names. It is quite right that a woman should transmit to her children her own name joined with that of her husband; but the complete abolition of the latter would appear to me an outrage on the part of her who would exact it, and an act of baseness on the part of him who would submit to it.'

"'You speak of matters of very remote date, Albert,' said the canoness, with a profound sigh, 'and are even less happy than I in the application of the rule. Our good abbe might, from your words, suppose that some one of our ancestors had been capable of such meanness. And since you appear to be so well informed on subjects of which I supposed you comparatively ignorant, you should not have made a reflection on this kind relative to political events, now, thank God, long passed away!'

"If my observation disturb you, I shall detail the facts, in order to clear the memory of our ancestor, Withold, the last Count of Rudolstadt, of every imputation injurious to it. It appears to interest my cousin," he added, seeing that my attention had become riveted upon him, astonished as I was to see him engage in a discussion so contrary to his philosophical ideas and silent habits. 'Know, then, Amelia, that our great-great-grandfather, Wratislaw, was only four years old when his mother, Ulrica of Rudolstadt, took it into her head to inflict upon him the insult of supplanting his true name—the name of his fathers, which was Podiebrad—by this Saxon name which you and I bear to-day—you without blushing for it, and I without being proud of it.'

"It is useless, to say the least of it," said my uncle, who seemed ill at ease, 'to recall events so distant from the time in which we live.'

"It appears to me," said Albert, 'that my aunt has gone much further back, in relating the high deeds of the Rudolstadts, and I do not know why one of us, when he recollects by chance that he is of Bohemian and not of Saxon origin—that he is called Podiebrad, and not Rudolstadt—should be guilty of ill-breeding in speaking of events which occurred not more than one hundred and twenty years ago.'

"I know very well," said the abbe, who had listened to Albert, with considerable interest, 'that your illustrious family was allied in past times to the royal line of George Podiebrad; but I was not aware that it had descended in so direct a line as to bear the name.'

"It is because my aunt, who knows how to draw out genealogical trees, has thought fit to forget the ancient and venerable one from which we have sprung. But a genealogical tree, upon which our glorious but dark history has been written in characters of blood, stands yet upon the neighboring mountains.'

"As Albert became very animated in speaking thus, and my uncle's countenance appeared to darken, the abbe, much as his curiosity was excited, endeavored to give the conversation a different turn. But mine would not suffer me to remain silent when so fair an opportunity presented itself for satisfying it. "'What do you mean, Albert?' I exclaimed, approaching him.

"I mean that which a Podiebrad should not be ignorant of," he replied: 'that the old oak of the Stone of Terror, which you see every day from your window, Amelia, and under which you should never sit down without raising your soul to God, bore, some three hundred years ago, fruit rather heavier than the dried acorns it produces to-day.'

"It is a shocking story," said the chaplain, horror-struck, 'and I do not know who could have informed the count of it.'

"The tradition of the country, and perhaps something more certain still," replied Albert.—'You have in vain burned the archives of the family, and the records of history, Mr. Chaplain; in vain imposed silence on the simple by sophistry, on the weak by threats: neither the dread of despotic power, however great, nor even that of hell itself, can stifle the thousand voices of the past which awaken on every side. No, no! they speak too loudly, these terrible voices, for that of a priest to hush them! They speak to our souls in sleep, in the whispings of spirits from the dead; they appeal to us in every sound we hear in the external world; they issue even from the trunks of the trees, like the gods of the olden time, to tell us of the crimes, the misfortunes, and the noble deeds of our ancestors!'

“‘And why, poor child,’ said the canoness, ‘why cherish in your mind such bitter thoughts—such dreadful recollections?’”

“‘It is your genealogies, dear aunt—it is your recurrence to the times that are gone—which have pictured to my mind those fifteen monks hung to the branches of the oak by the hand of one of my ancestors—the greatest, the most terrible, the most persevering—he who was surnamed the Terrible—the blind, the invincible John Ziska of the Chalice!’”

“‘The exalted, yet abhorred name of the chief of the Taborites, a sect which, during the war of the Hussites, surpassed all other religionists in their energy, their bravery, and their cruelty, fell like a thunderbolt on the ears of the abbé and the chaplain. The latter crossed himself, and my aunt drew back her chair, which was close to that of Albert. ‘Good Heaven!’ she exclaimed, ‘of what and of whom does this child speak? Do not heed him, Mr. Abbe! Never—no, never—was our family connected by any ties, either of kindred or friendship, with the odious reprobate whose name has just been mentioned.’”

“‘Speak for yourself, aunt,’ said Albert, with energy; you are a Rudolstadt to the heart’s core, although in reality a Podiebrad. As for myself, I have more Bohemian blood in my veins—all the purer, too, for its having less foreign admixture. My mother had neither Saxons, Bavarians, nor Prussians, in her genealogical tree; she was of pure Slavonic origin. And since you appear to care little for nobility, I, who am proud of my descent, shall inform you of it, if you are ignorant, that John Ziska left a daughter, who married the lord of Prachalitz, and that my mother herself, being a Prachalitz, descends in a direct line from John Ziska, just as you yourself, my aunt descend from the Rudolstadts.’”

“‘It is a dream, a delusion, Albert!’”

“‘Not so, dear aunt; I appeal to the chaplain, who is a God-fearing man, and will speak the truth. He has had in his hands the parchments which prove what I have asserted.’”

“‘I?’ exclaimed the chaplain, pale as death.

“‘You may confess it without blushing, before the abbe,’ replied Albert, with cutting irony, ‘since you only did your duty as an Austrian subject, and a good Catholic, in burning them the day after my mother’s death.’”

“‘That deed, which my conscience approved, was witnessed by God alone,’ falteringly replied the chaplain, terror-stricken at the disclosure of a secret of which he considered himself the sole human repository. ‘Who, Count Albert, could have revealed it to you?’”

“‘I have already told you, Mr. Chaplain—a voice which speaks louder than that of a priest.’”

“‘What voice, Albert?’ I exclaimed, with emotion.

“‘The voice which speaks in sleep,’ replied Albert.

“‘But that explains nothing, my son,’ said Count Christian, sighing.

“‘It is the voice of blood, my father,’ said Albert, in a tone so sepulchral that it made us shudder.

“‘Alas!’ said my uncle, clasping his hands, ‘these are the same reveries, the same phantoms of the imagination, which haunted his poor mother. She must have spoken of it to our child in her last illness,’ he added, turning to my aunt, ‘and such a story was well calculated to make a lively impression on his memory.’”

“‘That, brother, were impossible,’ replied the canoness, ‘Albert was not yet three years old when he lost his mother.’

“‘It is more reasonable to suppose,’ said the chaplain, in a whisper, ‘that some of those accursed heretical documents, full of lies and tissues of impiety, which she had hoarded up from family pride, and which she had yet the virtue to deliver up to me at her last hour, must have been preserved in the house.’

“‘Not one of these remained,’ returned Albert, who had not missed one syllable that the chaplain had uttered, though he spoke very low, and Albert was striding about in great agitation at the farthest extremity of the grand saloon. ‘You knew right well, Monsieur Chaplain, that you destroyed them all, and that the very day after her death, you searched and rummaged every corner of her apartments.’

“‘Who has thus presumed to assist, or rather, bewilder your memory?’ asked Count Christian sternly. ‘What unfaithful or imprudent servant has ventured to disturb your young spirit by a recital, of course, all exaggerated and distorted, of these domestic events?’

“‘No one, my father. On my religion and my conscience I swear it to you.’

“‘The arch enemy of man has interfered in all this!’ exclaimed the chaplain, in utter consternation.

“‘It would be more consistent with reason and with christianity,’ observed the abbe, ‘to conclude that Count Albert is endowed with a prodigious memory, and events, the sight of which rarely produce strong impressions on the minds of the young, have become fixed in his memory. All that I have seen of his extraordinary intellect leads me easily to accept the belief that his reason was most precociously developed, and as to his faculty of retaining the remembrance of things, I have often taken note of it as extraordinary.’

“‘It only appears extraordinary to you, because *you* do not possess it in the least,’ replied Albert, drily. ‘For instance, you do not remember what you did in the year 1619, after Withold Podiebrad, the Protestant, the valiant and the faithful—your grand-sire, my dear aunt—the last who bore that name, reddened the Stone of Terror with his blood. You have forgotten, I would lay any wager, your own conduct at that crisis, Monsieur Abbe.’

“‘I have indeed forgotten it entirely,’ said the abbe, with a sneering smile, which was in the very worst taste at a moment when it was becoming apparent to us all that Albert was totally out of his senses.

“‘Well, then,’ resumed Albert, in no sort disconcerted, ‘I will recall it to your memory. You went with all speed, and advised the Imperialist soldiers, who had done the deed, to take hiding or to fly, because the mechanics of Pilsen, who were courageous enough to boast themselves Protestants, and who adored Withold, were already afoot to avenge their lord’s death, and bent on hewing them to pieces. Then you came to my ancestress, Ulrica, the terrified and trembling widow of Count Withold, and pledged yourself to make her peace with the Emperor Ferdinand II., for procure the preservation to her of all her possessions, of all her titles, of her own liberty, and the life of her children, if she would follow your advice, and pay your services at the rate of their weight in gold. She consented, or rather her maternal love, not she, consented to that act of weakness. She suspected no longer the martyrdom of her noble spouse. She was a Catholic by birth, and had abjured her own faith only through love

for him. She could not, therefore, contemplate the endurance of misery, proscription, persecution, in order to preserve to the children of Withold a faith to which he had signed his own adherence with his blood, and a name which he had rendered of late more famous than that of all his ancestors, whether they were called *Hussites*, *Calistins*, *Taborites*, *Orphans*, *United Brethren*, or *Lutherans*.' All these names, my dear Porporina, are the titles of different sects, which adhered to the heresies of John Huss and of Luther, and to which it is probable that branch of the Podiebrads from which we are descended had attached itself. 'At length,' continued Albert, 'the Saxon woman was terrified, and yielded. You took possession of the castle, compelled the withdrawal of the Imperialists, caused our territories to be respected, and made a public *auto da fe* of all our titles and hereditary archives. It was therefore that my aunt, to her own great satisfaction, has been prevented from re-establishing the genealogical tree of the Podiebrads, and has fallen back upon the more sterile pastures of the Rudolstadt. To reward your services you were made rich, vastly rich. Three months later, permission was given Ulrica to go to Vienna, there to embrace the knees of the Emperor, who very generously consented to her denationalizing her children and causing them to be educated by you in the Roman Catholic faith, and to be enrolled under those very banners against which their father and their forefathers had fought so valiantly and so long. We were incorporated, I and my sons, in the ranks of Austrian tyranny.

"You and your sons!" cried my aunt in despair, seeing that he was now utterly astray.

"Yes, my sons Sigismund and Rudolph," replied Albert, very seriously.

"Those are the names of my father and my uncle!" cried Count Christian. 'Albert, where is your reason? Be yourself again, my son. Above a century has elapsed since those sad events were wrought out by the will of Providence.'

"Albert would not give up the point. He had persuaded himself, and would have persuaded us, that he was the same Wratislaw, the son of Podiebrad, who bore the maternal name of Rudolstadt. He related to us all the events of his childhood, the distinct recollection which he preserved of the execution of Count Withold, an execution which he ascribed solely to the odious Jesuit, Dithmar, who, according to him, was no other than the abbe, his present tutor,—the deep hatred which he had entertained from his childhood upward for this Dithmar, for Austria, and in a word, for all Imperialists and Catholics. Beyond this recollection all appeared to become chaotic, and he uttered a thousand incomprehensible dicta about eternal and perpetual life, asserting the reappearance of men on earth, that John Huss was predestined to return to Bohemia a hundred years after his death—a prediction which, as he asserted, had already met its accomplishment—since, as he insisted, Luther was no other than John Huss resuscitated. In a word, his conversation became a confused jargon of heresy, superstition, dim metaphysics, and poetical raving, and yet all was uttered with such an air of conviction, with such a preservation of details, and with statements so interesting of what he pretended to have seen, not only in the person of Wratislaw, but also in that of John Ziska, and I know not how many dead persons beside, whom he maintained to have been no other than previous incarnations of himself in a prior state of existence, that we all stood listening to him with open mouths, without

the power of either interrupting or contradicting him. My uncle and aunt, who were ineffably horror-stricken by these hallucinations, which were in their eyes actually implous, were anxious, at least, to penetrate them to the bottom, for they had never developed themselves openly at any prior period; and in order to cure, it was necessary, beyond doubt, to comprehend them. The abbe persisted in endeavoring to attribute the whole matter to a joke, and to make us believe that the Count Albert's temper was a compound of malicious drollery, and that he was amusing himself by mystifying us with his unparalleled erudition. 'He has read so much,' said he, 'that he can re-word the history of all ages, chapter by chapter, with such minute details, that no one who hears him, how little inclined he may be soever to give credit to the marvellous, can easily doubt that he must have been present at the scenes which he describes so much to the life.' The canoness, who, in her ardent devotion, is not, after all, very far removed from superstition, and who was beginning to believe her nephew on his word, took the abbe's insinuations altogether in a false light, and told him that she would advise him to keep his jocose explanations for some gayer occasion, and then made an earnest effort to induce Albert to retract the efforts of which his head was so full.

"'Beware, aunt!' exclaimed Albert, impatiently, 'beware lest I be compelled to tell you who you are. Hitherto I have avoided the knowledge, but something is whispering to me, even now, that the Saxon Ulrica is beside me!'

"'What, my poor son,' she answered, 'do you take me for that kind and devoted ancestress who had wit to preserve to her descendants independence, life, and the honors which they still enjoy? Do you think that she is raised to life in my person? Well, Albert, I love you so well that I would do yet more than she for you; I would sacrifice my life if I were able at this very moment to give rest and peace to your perturbed spirit.'

"Albert gazed at her for some seconds with eyes of blended sternness and affection, but at length, kneeling down before her, he exclaimed, 'No, no, you are an angel, and you were a communicant of old in the wooden chalice of the Hussites. But the Saxon woman is here, notwithstanding, and already several times her voice has this day echoed in my ears.'

"'Beware lest it should prove to be I,' said I in my turn, persisting in the endeavor to give a gay turn to the whole subject, 'and at all events blame me not that I would not surrender you to the executioners in the year 1619.'

"'You, my mother!' he then cried, gazing on me with an expression that really alarmed me; 'for if it be so, I cannot pardon you. God caused me, when born again, to be born of a stronger woman; he rebaptised me in my own substance, which had been lost, I know not how, in the blood of Zisca. Amelia, look not at me, above all, speak not to me, for it is your blood that inflicts upon me all that I this day endure.'

"And with these words he left the room hastily, and we all stood disconcerted at the fatal discovery which we had made, at length, of the total derangement of his intellects.

"It was at that time about two hours after noon; we had dined very quietly; Albert had drank nothing but water, so that we could not even deceive ourselves into the idea that his hallucinations were the result of intoxication. My aunt and the chaplain, who fancied

that he must be exceedingly ill, rose at once and followed him, in order to give him their care. But what is quite incomprehensible, he had already disappeared, as if by enchantment. He was not to be found in his own apartment, nor in that of his mother, where he was often wont to conceal himself, nor in any corner of the castle. He was sought for in the gardens, in the warren, in the surrounding woods, among the mountains, but far or near, no one had laid eyes on him. Not a track of his footsteps were to be discovered. Thus passed the day and night. Not a soul in the house closed an eye or lay down to rest.

"The whole family went to prayers, and the servants were on foot until daybreak, seeking him with torches. The next day passed amid the like solitudes, the next night amid the like terrors. I cannot describe to you the terrors which I suffered—I, who had never before known what it is to suffer, never had to tremble during all my life before at any domestic events of importance. I begun seriously to believe that Albert had either committed suicide, or made his escape forever. I fell into convulsions, and afterwards contracted a violent fever. I had still a remnant of love left within me, in spite of all the terror with which this fatal and fantastical being inspired me. My father still kept up his courage enough to go out hunting daily, in the conviction that he should one day find Albert in the woods. My poor aunt, consumed by her sorrow, but still courageous and energetic, nursed me tenderly, and endeavored to keep up the courage of every one. My uncle prayed both night and day, and when I observed his faith and stoical resignation to the will of heaven, I regretted that I could not participate in his devotion.

"The abbe affected a little annoyance. 'It is true,' said he, 'that Albert has never before departed in the like manner from my presence, but he has always appeared to stand in need of moments of solitude and self-examination.' It was his idea that the only mode of conquering these notions of his, was never to contradict them. In fact, this under-bred person was a mere selfish and subtle intriguer, who only cared to gain the large salary attached to his duties as tutor and in order to make them last as long as possible, had deliberately deceived the family as related to his good offices. Engaged in his own pleasures or occupations, he had abandoned Albert to his own utmost irregularities. It is probable that he had often seen him sick, and often in his fits of delirium, but undoubtedly he had always given free scope to all his fantasies. One thing is certain, that he had possessed the ability to conceal them from all who had the means of giving us information concerning them, as all the letters which my uncle ever received on the subject of his son, were filled with admiration of his manners and person, and congratulations on his advantages of bearing and appearance. Albert seems nowhere to have left the impression on any mind that he was either ill in body or in mind. Whatever he may be now, his mental existence during these eight years is to this very hour an impenetrable secret, withheld from all of us. At the expiration of three days, the abbe, seeing that he did not return, and fearing that his own prospects would be ruined by this catastrophe, left the castle, stating himself that he was setting out for Prague, whither, according to his assertions, the wish to obtain some rare book might have led his pupil. 'He is,' said he, 'like those learned men who bury themselves alive in their searches after knowledge, and who forget the whole world in the pursuit of their innocent

passion.' So, with such consolation as his words imparted, the abbe took himself away and we saw him no more.

"At length, when seven days of mortal anguish had expired, and we had begun utterly to despair, my aunt, happening to pass by Albert's open door, in the afternoon, saw him seated in his arm-chair, caressing his dog, which had followed him mysteriously in his journey. His garments were neither soiled nor rent, but the gold embroideries were tarnished, as if he had been dwelling in a damp place, or had been passing his nights in the open air. His shoes did not show as though he had walked far, but his beard and hair shewed that for a long time past he had utterly neglected the care of his person. From that day forth he has constantly refused either to shave his beard, or powder his hair, like other men of his rank. That is what made you fancy that he looks like a ghost.

"My aunt rushed up to him with an exclamation of surprise.

"'What ails you, my dear aunt?' said he, kissing her hand; 'one would suppose you had not seen me in the last century.'

"'Unhappy boy!' she answered, 'it is seven days since you have left us; seven days of anguish, seven nights of horror, that we have sought you, bewept you, prayed for you!'

"'Seven days!' cried Albert, gazing at her in wonder; 'seven hours you mean, I fancy; for I went out this morning to take a walk, and here I am home in time to sup with you. How then can I have alarmed you so by so short an absence?'

"'Ah! I have made a slip of the tongue,' she answered readily, afraid of aggravating his mood. 'I meant to say seven hours, of course. I grew uneasy, because you are not wont to take such long walks; and, again, I had a horrible dream this evening. I was very silly, indeed.'

"'Ah, my dear good aunt,' said Albert, still kissing her hands, 'you dote on me still as if I were a little child. I hope my father has not been equally alarmed about me.'

"'By no means! He is waiting supper for you; you must be very hungry?'

"'No, not very. I made a very good dinner.'

"'Where, and when, Albert?'

"'Here at noon, with all of you, my good aunt; where else? You have not come to yourself, I see; oh! how much I reproach myself for so alarming you. But how could I foresee it?'

"'You know that it is often thus with me. Let me then enquire what you have eaten, and where you have slept since you left us.'

"'How should I be disposed to eat or sleep since this morning?'

"'And do you not feel ill?'

"'Not a particle.'

"'Nor fatigued? I doubt not you have walked far, and climbed the hills—such walks are very toilsome. Where have you been?'

"Albert covered his eyes with his hand, as if he were anxious to recollect himself, but he could tell nothing.

"'I suppose I walked,' he said at length, 'as I did when I was a child, without seeing anything, for I must admit that I know nothing about it. I suppose I was very absent. You know I have never had the power of giving you the facts when you questioned me.'

"'And while you were travelling have you paid no more attention than of old to what you saw?'

"'Sometimes, yes—sometimes, no. I remember much that I have seen, but, thank God! I forget much more.'

“Why thank God?”

“Because there is so much misery to be seen in the world,” said he, rising, with a gloomy expression, which my aunt had not previously observed in him. She saw that it would not do to prolong the conversation with him, and hurried away to announce his son’s return to my uncle. No one in the house as yet knew it; no one had seen him come in. His return had left no visible marks more than his departure.

“My poor uncle, who had borne his sorrow with so much constancy and courage, was found wanting in the first moments of joy. He fainted away, and, when Albert made his appearance, was the most altered of the two; but in that time Albert, who, since his long journeying, had seemed insensible to every emotion, was once more entirely changed, and different from all that he had been hitherto. He offered his father a thousand caresses, became very uneasy at seeing the change which had taken place in him, and was anxious to learn the cause of it. But when they felt themselves capable of telling him the reasons of it, he never could understand what had passed, and everything he said bore on it such a stamp of sincerity and good faith, that they could not doubt that he was really ignorant where he had been during his seven days’ absence.”

“What you tell me,” said Consuelo, “is like a dream, and is more like, my dear baroness, to set me musing, than to put me to sleep. How can it be that a man should live seven days unconscious of all things?”

“This is nothing to what I have yet to tell you, and until you have seen with your own eyes that instead of exaggerating I extenuate matters, and abridge them, you will, I can easily conceive, have no trouble to believe me. I tell you that which I myself have seen; and I sometimes ask myself, even now, whether Albert is a sorcerer, or is merely amusing himself at our expense. But it is growing late, and I am exhausting your good-nature.”

“I rather am exhausting yours,” said Consuelo; “you must be tired of talking. Let us, if you will, put off the sequel of this strange tale till to-morrow evening.”

“To-morrow be it then,” said the young baroness, taking leave of her with a kiss.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE strange story to which she had been listening kept Consuelo long awake. The night, dark, rainy, and full of wild resounding gusts, added not a little to superstitious dreams, of which she had never dreamed before. “Is there, then,” she mused with herself, “some strange destiny which weighs down certain beings? How can this girl, who has been speaking to me for the last half hour, have so offended Providence, when she is so frank and sincere as to her wounded self-love, and her bright dreams overcast? Nay, how can I myself so have sinned as to deserve such a disruption of my love, such a shock to my heart? And, alas! what can this frenzied Albert of Rudolstadt have committed, that he has thus lost all self-knowledge, and all self-governance? What detestation could have moved Prov-

dence so to abandon Anzoletto to all depraved senses and perverse temptations?"

Overpowered at last by weariness, she slept, and lost herself in a maze of unmeaning and inconsequential dreams. Twice or thrice she awoke and slept again, ignorant where she was, and fancying herself still on her journey. Porpora, Anzoletto, the Count Zustiniani, and Corilla, all floated before her, repeating strange and dolorous words, charging her with crimes, the penalty of which she seemed to hear, without any memory of their commission. But all her other visions waned before that of Count Albert, who ever flitted across her eyes, with his black beard, his glassy eye, and his gold-laced sable garb, now sprinkled with tears, like a moist cloth.

At length, awaking with a start, she saw Amelia, already dressed, all fresh and smiling, by her bed-side.

"Do you know, dear Porporina," said the young baroness, kissing her on the brow, "that you, too, have something strange about you? Am I fated to live with supernatural persons? for certainly you, too, are one. I have been watching you asleep this half hour, to see if you are prettier than I by daylight. I confess I should be vexed if you were, for though I have utterly and earnestly discarded all my love of Albert forever, I should be piqued to see him smitten with you. What would you have? He is the only man here. Hitherto I the only woman. Now we are two, and we shall have a crow to pick if you outshine me wholly."

"You love to jest!" said Consuelo, "but it is not kind of you. But leave off such nonsense, and tell me what there is odd about me. Perhaps I am grown uglier than ever; I dare say it is so."

"To tell you the truth, Nina, my first look at you this morning, with your pale face, your great eyes, half shut, and rather fixed than sleeping, and your thin arm lying on the coverlid, did give me a momentary triumph. Then, as I gazed on you still, I grew frightened at your motionless attitude, and your truly royal air. Your arm is queen-like, I insist on it; and your calmness has a dominion and a power in it of which I can give no account. Now I think you horribly beautiful, and yet there is gentleness in all your aspect. Tell me what you are, who at once attract and alarm me. I am ashamed of all the follies I told you of myself last night. As yet you have told me nothing of yourself, and yet you are aware of almost all my faults."

"If I have a queenly air, I certainly never dreamed I had it," replied Consuelo, with a wan smile. "It must be the sad air of a dis-crowned one. As to my beauty, I have always considered that more than doubtful; but as to my opinion of you, my dear Baroness Amelia, I have no doubt of your frankness or kindness."

"Oh! frank I am—but are you so, Nina? Surely, you look as if you had the nobleness of truth; but are you communicative? I fancy not."

"It would not have become me to be so the first. It was for you, new patroness and mistress of my destiny, to make the first advances to me."

"You are right; but your good sense chills me. If I seem too hair-brained you won't preach at me too much, will you?"

"I have no right to do so at all. I am your music-mistress—no more. Besides, I am a poor girl of the people, and how should I presume to aspire above my place?"

"You a poor girl of the people, my proud Porporina? Oh! it can-

not be—impossible! I would rather believe you the mysterious child of some princely race. What was your mother's profession?"

"She was a singer, as I am!"

"And your father?"

Consuelo was speechless; she had not prepared answers for all the rash familiar questions of the young headlong baroness. In truth, she had never heard her father named, nor had thought of enquiring if she had a father.

"Come!" said Amelia, bursting out laughing, "it is so: I was sure of it; your father was some Spanish Grandee, or Doge of Venice."

But to Consuelo such expressions sounded light—almost insulting.

"And so," she said, "I presume an honest mechanic, or a poor artist, has not the right to transmit to his children any natural distinctions! Must the children of the poor be necessarily coarse and deformed?"

"My aunt Wenceslawa would hold that to be a sarcasm!" said the baroness, laughing louder yet. "Come, dear Nina, pardon me if I have made you a little angry, and let me build a better romance upon you, in my head. But dress yourself quickly, my dear; the bell is going to ring, and my aunt would rather let all the family die of hunger than breakfast without you. I will help you to open your trunks. I am sure you have brought some pretty dresses from Venice, and that you will put me up to the last fashions—me, who have lived here so long among savages."

Consuelo gave her the keys, scarce listening to her, while she made haste to dress her hair, and Amelia hastened to open the trunks, which she expected to find full of clothes; but, to her great surprise, she saw nothing but old music books, loose sheets of music, tattered with much use, and manuscripts apparently undecypherable.

"Ah! what is all this?" she cried, wiping the dust from her pretty fingers; "you have a mighty odd wardrobe, my child."

"They are treasures; treat them with respect, baroness. Some are autographs of the greatest masters, and I would rather lose my voice than miss returning them to Porpora, who lent them to me." Amelia opened another box, which was filled with ruled paper, treatises on music, and other works on composition, harmony, and counterpoint.

"Ah! I understand," said she, laughing. "This is your jewel box."

"I have no other," replied Consuelo, "and I trust that you will often use this one."

"Well—well—I see that you are a stern mistress. But may I ask you, my dear Nina, where you have put your dresses?"

"There, in that little paper box," said Consuelo, going to fetch it, and showing the baroness a little black silk dress, neatly and freshly folded.

"Is this all?" asked Amelia.

"That is all, except my travelling dress," said Consuelo. "But when I have been a few days here I will make another, just like this, that I may have a change."

"Ah, my dear, then you are in mourning?"

"Perhaps so, signora," said Consuelo, sadly.

"Pardon me, I pray. I ought to have known from your manner that you were sad at heart, and I love you even better so. We shall sympathise with each other all the more quickly. For I also have

causes enough for sorrow, and might as well wear mourning now for the husband who is destined for me. Ah, my dear Nina, be not scared at my wildness, it is often put on to conceal deep sorrows."

They kissed each other affectionately, and went down into the breakfast room, where they were waited for.

Consuelo saw at a glance that her modest black dress, and white handkerchief, closed quite to her chin by a broach of jet, had given the canoness a favorable opinion of her. The old Count Christian was something less reserved, and all were as affable to her as on the previous evening. The Baron Frederick, in his courtesy, had refrained from going out hunting this day, but he could not find a word to say, though he had prepared a thousand courtesies in advance for the care she was about to take of his daughter. But he sat down by her at the table, and loaded her plate so assiduously that he had no time to attend to his own meal. The chaplain enquired of her concerning their order of processions in Venice, the luxury and decorations of the churches, and the like, and seeing by her replies that she had much frequented them; learning moreover, that it was in them she had been taught to sing, he showed her much consideration.

As to Count Albert, Consuelo scarce dared raise her eyes to him, for no other reason than that about him only was she curious. She knew not what notice he had taken of her. Only as she crossed the room she saw his reflection in a mirror, and observed that he was dressed with some taste, though always in black. It was evidently the figure of a man of noble rank, but his dishevelled hair and beard, and his darkly pale complexion, gave him the aspect of wearing the neglected head of a handsome fisher of the Adriatic, on the shoulders of a nobleman.

The music of his voice, however, soon attracted Consuelo, and ere long she took the courage to look at him. She was surprised then to find in him the air and manners of an extremely sensible man. He spoke little, but with judgment, and when she rose he offered her his hand—without looking at her it is true, for he had not done her that honor since the previous evening—but with much courtesy and grace. She trembled from head to foot as she placed her hand in that of the romantic hero of all the strange tales she had heard the last evening. She expected to find it cold, as that of a corpse. But it was soft and warm, as that of a gentleman. To say the truth, Consuelo could scarce admit the fact. Her internal agitation rendered her almost giddy, and Amelia's eye, which followed her every movement, would have completed her confusion, had she not armed herself with dignity to confront the sly and heedless girl. She returned the low bow which Albert made her, as he led her to a seat, but not a glance, much less a word, was exchanged between them.

"Do you know, O, false Porporina," said Amelia in her ear, as she came down to sit close beside her, "that you are working wonders on my cousin?"

"I certainly have not seen it yet," said Consuelo.

"That is because you do not deign to observe his manners toward me. For a year past he has not offered me his hand to come, or to go, and lo! now he is executing it with all grace. It is true that he is now in one of his most lucid intervals. One would say that you had brought him both reason and health. But trust not too much to appearances, Nina. It will be with you as with me. After three days' cordiality he will not even remember your existence."

"I see," said Consuelo, "this at least, that I must get used to joking."

"Is it not true, little aunt," whispered Amelia, addressing the canoness, who had just taken her seat beside her and Amelia, "that my cousin is quite charming to our dear Porporina?"

"Do not ridicule him, Amelia," Wenceslawa answered, gently. "Mademoiselle will learn the cause of our regrets speedily enough."

"I am not ridiculing him, aunt, but Albert is quite well this morning, and I rejoice to see him, as I have not seen him so before, since I have been here. If he were shaved, and had his hair powdered, like the rest of the world, no one would believe he had ever been sick."

"His calm and healthful aspect does strike me favorably," said the canoness, "but I never dare to hope for the continuance of so favorable a state of things."

"How noble and good an expression he has," said Consuelo, eager to gratify the canoness.

"Do you think so?" said Amelia, riveting on her a sportive, yet half-malicious, glance.

"Yes, I *do* think so," said Consuelo, firmly, "and I told you so last night, mademoiselle. No human face ever inspired me with more respect."

"Ah! dear girl!" cried the canoness, changing at once from her stiff manner, and clasping Consuelo's hand affectionately. "Good hearts readily recognise each other. I feared that my poor nephew would alarm you. It is such sorrow to me to perceive the disgust which some faces show on observing his sufferings. But you have kind feelings, I see clearly, and you have distinguished at once that this ailing and blighted frame contains a noble spirit, worthier of a better lot."

Consuelo was moved almost to tears by the words of the good old canoness, and kissed her withered hand respectfully. Her heart felt and sympathised more deeply with the old hunchback than with the brilliant and frivolous Amelia.

They were soon interrupted by the Baron Frederick, who, counting on his courage more than on his power, came up with the idea of asking a favor of la Signora Porporina. More awkward with ladies than even his elder brother—for that sort of awkwardness seemed to be so far a family ailment that it was scarcely wonderful to see it developed into wild rudeness in the case of Albert—he began to stammer out an address full of excuses, which Amelia undertook to translate to Consuelo. "My father asks you," said she, "if you feel courage enough to undertake a little music after so tedious a journey, and if it will not be imposing too much on your good nature, to ask you to hear my voice, and judge of my method."

"With all my heart," said Consuelo, jumping up quickly, and going to the piano.

"You will see," whispered Amelia, arranging her music on the desk, "that this will soon put Albert to flight, in spite of both our bright eyes."

And, in fact, Amelia had scarcely begun her prelude, before Albert rose and left the room on tip-toe, as if he hoped that he should not be seen.

"It is a great thing," said Amelia, still speaking in a whisper, "that he did not bang the doors together furiously, as he very often does when I am singing. He is quite amiable, one might say gallant to-day."

The chaplain now approached the harpsichord, hoping, as it would seem, to mask Albert's flight; the rest of the family stood around in a semicircle, to hear Consuelo's judgment of her pupil.

Amelia dashed bravely into an air of Pergolese's *Archilles in Scyros*, and sang it intrepidly from end to end, with a fresh shrill voice, accompanied by so comical a German accent, that Consuelo, who never had heard aught the least like it, could hardly restrain a smile, at every word. She had no need to listen to four bars, before she saw that the young baroness had no true notion, no intelligence for music whatsoever. A flexible tone she had, and good lessons she might have taken, but her character was too trifling to allow of her studying anything faithfully. For the same reason she had no distrust whatever of her own powers, but hammered away with German matter-of-fact coolness at the most difficult and daring passages, and banging her accompaniment most strenuously, correcting her time as she best might, adding time to the bars following other bars which she had curtailed, and so utterly changing the character of the music, that Consuelo would really have doubted what she was listening to had the music not been before her eyes.

Nevertheless, Count Christian, who knew nothing at all about the matter, but who imagined his niece to be as shy as he would have been in her place, kept crying, to encourage her, "Very well—very well, Amelia! Beautiful music—truly beautiful music!"

The canoness, who was but little better informed, looked anxiously into Consuelo's eyes, to read her opinion; and the baron, who liked no music but the tantaras of the hunting-horn, and believing that her song was above his comprehension, confidently expected the approval of the judge. The chaplain also was charmed with her flourishes, nothing like which had ever reached his ears before Amelia's arrival at the castle, and nodded his great head to and fro, in absolute contentment.

Consuelo saw that to tell them the truth bluntly would be to thunderstrike the whole family. She reserved herself, therefore, for the enlightenment of her pupil in private, on all that she had forgot, and all that she had to learn; praised her voice, asked some questions as to her studies, approved the masters she had been taught, and forbore to tell her that she had studied the wrong end foremost.

The party then separated, all very well pleased with a trial which had really been a very severe one to Consuelo. She was obliged to go and shut herself up in her own room, with the music she had heard so profaned, and to read it over with her eyes, and sing it mentally, in order to efface from her brain the disagreeable impression which she had received.

CHAPTER XXX.

WHEN the family came together again in the evening, Consuelo, who was beginning to be more at her ease with these people, with whom she was gradually becoming acquainted, answered the questions, which, in their turn, they took courage to ask her, concerning her country, her art, and her travels, less briefly and more freely than

she had cared to do before. She, however, still carefully avoided, according to the rule which she had laid down to herself, to speak of her own concerns, and talked of the things among which she had lived, without any allusion to the part she had played therein. It was all in vain that the inquisitive Amelia endeavored to turn the conversation to points which should compel her to enter upon her own personal career, for Consuelo, easily perceiving her artifices, did not for a single instant betray the incognito which she had resolved to maintain. It would be difficult to explain why she found a peculiar charm in this sort of mystery. Several reasons conduced to it. In the first place she had promised, nay, even sworn, to Porpora to hold herself in such seclusion and solitude as should render it impossible for Anzoleto to discover her traces, even if he should endeavor to do so. A very needless precaution, by the way, for Anzoleto was now occupied only by his career and success at Venice.

In the second place, Consuelo, who was of course desirous of gaining the esteem and regard of a family which had so kindly granted a temporary asylum to her while thus sorrowful and deserted, felt instinctively that she should be much better regarded as a simple musician, a pupil of Porpora's, and a teacher of singing, than as a *prima donna*, a woman of the theatre, and a celebrated *cantatrice*. She knew that such a situation, once avowed, would leave her a very difficult part to play with that simple and religious family; and it is more than probable, that even in despite of Porpora's introduction, the arrival of the actress Consuelo, the wonder of San Samuel, would have surprised and dismayed them. But if these two powerful motives had not existed, Consuelo would have still felt an anxious desire to conceal from every one the splendors and the misery of her destiny. Everything in her whole life was so singularly complicated, her power with her weakness, her glory with her love, that she could not raise a corner of her mask without uncovering some wounded spot.

This renunciation of vanities, which might have solaced another woman, proved the salvation of this courageous being. In renouncing all compassion, as well as all human glory, she felt celestial strength come to her aid. "I must regain some portion of my former happiness," she said; "that which I so long enjoyed, and which consisted in loving and being beloved. The moment I sought the world's admiration it withdrew its love, and I have paid too dear for the honors men bestowed in place of their good-will. Let me begin again, obscure and insignificant, that I may be subjected neither to envy nor ingratitude, nor enmity on the earth. The least token of sympathy is sweet, and the highest testimony of admiration is mingled with bitterness. If there be proud and strong hearts to whom praise suffices, and whom triumph consoles, I have cruelly experienced that mine is not of the number. Alas! glory has torn my lover's heart from me; let humility yield me in return at least some friends."

It was not thus that Porpora meant. In removing Consuelo from Venice, and from the dangers and agonies of her love, he only intended to procure her some repose before recalling her to the scene of ambition, and launching her afresh into the storms of artistic life. He did not know his pupil. He believed her more of a woman—that is to say, more impressionable than she was. In thinking of her, he did not fancy her as calm, affectionate, and busied with others, as she had already been able to become, but plunged in tears and de-

voured with vain regret. But he thought at the same time that a reaction would take place, and that he should find her cured of her love, and anxious to recommence the exercise of her powers, and enjoy the privileges of her genius.

The pure and religious feeling conceived by Consuelo, of the part she was to play in the family of Rudolstadt, spread from this day a holy serenity over her words, her actions, and her countenance. Those who had formerly seen her dazzling with love and joy beneath the sun of Venice, could not easily have understood how she could become all at once calm and gentle in the midst of strangers, in the depths of gloomy forests, with her love blighted, both as regarded the past and the future. But goodness finds strength where pride only meets despair. Consuelo was glorious that evening, with a beauty which she had not hitherto displayed. It was not the half-developed impulse of sleeping nature waiting to be roused, nor the expansion of a power which seizes the spectators with surprise or delight; neither was it the hidden, incomprehensible beauty of the *scolare zingarella*; no, it was the graceful, penetrating charm of a pure and self-possessed woman, governed by her own sacred impulses.

Her gentle and simple hosts needed no other than their generous instincts to drink in, if I may use the expression, the mysterious incense which the angelic soul of Consuelo exhaled in their intellectual atmosphere. They experienced, even in looking at her, a moral elevation which they might have found it difficult to explain, but the sweetness of which filled them as with a new life. Albert seemed for the first time to enjoy the full possession of his faculties. He was obliging and good-natured with every one. He was suitably so with Consuelo, and spoke to her at different times in such terms as showed that he had not relinquished, as might be supposed, the elevated intellect and clear judgment with which nature had endowed him. The baron did not once fall asleep, the canoness ceased to sigh, and Count Christian, who used to sink at night into his arm-chair, bent down under the weight of old age and vexation, remained erect with his back to the chimney, in the centre of his family, and sharing in the easy and pleasant conversation, which was prolonged till nine in the evening.

"God has at length heard our prayers," said the chaplain to Count Christian and the canoness, who remained in the saloon after the departure of the baron and the young people. "Count Albert has this day entered his thirtieth year, and this solemn day, so dreaded by him and ourselves, has passed over calmly and with unspeakable happiness."

"Yes, let us return thanks unto God," said the old count. "It may prove but a blessed dream, sent for a moment to comfort us, but I could not help thinking all this day, and this evening in particular, that my son was perfectly cured."

"Brother," replied the canoness, "and you, worthy chaplain, I entreat pardon, but you have always believed Albert to be tormented by the enemy of human kind. For myself, I thought him at issue with opposing powers which disputed the possession of his poor soul, for often, when he repeated words of the bad angel, Heaven spoke from his mouth the next moment. Do you recollect what he said yesterday evening during the storm, and his words on leaving us?—'The peace of God has come down on this house.' Albert experienced the miracle in himself, and I believe in his recovery as in the divine promise."

The chaplain was too timid to admit all at once so bold a proposition. He extricated himself from his embarrassment by saying—"Let us ascribe it to eternal goodness;" "God reads hidden things;" "The soul should lose itself in God;" and other sentences, more consolatory than novel.

Count Christian was divided between the desire of conforming to the somewhat exaggerated asceticism of his good sister, and the respect imposed by the prudent and unquestioning orthodoxy of his confessor.

He endeavored to turn the conversation by speaking of the charming demeanor of Porporina. The canoness, who loved her already, praised her yet more; and the chaplain sanctioned the preference which they experienced for her. It never entered their heads to attribute the miracle which had taken place among them, to Consuelo. They accepted the benefit without considering its source. It was what Consuelo would have asked of God, could she have been consulted.

Amelia was a closer observer. It soon became evident to her that her cousin could conceal the disorder of his thoughts from persons whom he feared, as well as from those whom he wished to please. Before relations and friends of the family whom he either disliked or esteemed, he never betrayed by any outward demonstration the eccentricity of his character. When Consuelo expressed her surprise at what had been related the preceding evening, Amelia, tormented by a secret uneasiness, tried to make her afraid of Count Albert by recitals which had already terrified herself. "Ah, my poor friend," said she, "distrust this deceitful calm; it is a pause which always intervenes between a recent and an approaching crisis. You see him to-day as I first saw him, when I arrived here in the beginning of last year. Alas! if you were destined to become the wife of such a visionary, and if, to combat your reluctance they had determined to keep you prisoner for an indefinite period in this frightful castle, with surprises, terrors, and agitations for your daily fare—nothing to be seen but tears, exorcisms, and extravagances—expecting a cure which will never happen—you would be quite disenchanted with the fine manners of Albert, and the honied words of the family."

"It is not credible," said Consuelo, "that they would unite you against your will to a man whom you do not love. You appear to be the idol of your relatives."

"They will not force me; they know that would be impossible. But they forget that Albert is not the only husband who would suit me, and God knows when they will give up the foolish hope that the affection with which I at first regarded him will return. And then my poor father, who has here wherewith to satisfy his passion for the chase, finds himself so well off in this horrible castle, that he will always discover some pretext for retarding our departure. Ah! if you only knew some secret, my dear Nina, to make all the game in the country perish in one night, you would render me an inestimable service."

"I can do nothing, unfortunately, but try to amuse you by giving you lessons in music, and chatting with you in the evening when you are not inclined to sleep. I shall do my utmost to soothe and to compose you."

"You remind me," said Amelia, "that I have not related the remainder of the story. I shall begin at once, that I may not keep you any too late."

"Some days after his mysterious absence, which he still believed had only lasted seven hours, Albert remarked the absence of the abbé, and asked where he had gone.

"His presence was no longer necessary,' they replied; 'he returned to his own pursuits. Did you not observe his absence?'

"I perceived,' replied Albert, 'that something is taken from the sum of my suffering, but I did not know what it was.'

"You suffer much then, Albert,' asked the canoness.

"Much;' he replied, in the tone of a man who is asked what sort of night he has passed.

"And the abbe was obnoxious to you?' said Count Christian.

"Very,' he replied, in the same tone.

"And why, my son, did you not say so sooner? Why have you borne for so long a time the presence of a man whom you so much disliked, without informing me of it? Do you doubt, my dear child, that I should have quickly terminated your sufferings?'

"It was but a feeble addition to my grief,' said Albert, with frightful tranquillity; 'and your kindness which I never distrusted, my dear father, would have but slightly relieved it, by giving me another superintendent.'

"Say another travelling companion, my son; you employ an expression injurious to my tenderness.'

"Your tenderness was the cause of your anxiety, my father. You could not be aware of the evil you inflicted on me in sending me from this house, where it was designed by Providence I should remain till its plans for me should be accomplished. You thought to labor for my cure and repose; but I knew better what was good for us both—I knew that I should obey you—and this duty I have fulfilled.'

"I know your virtue and your affection, Albert; but can you not explain yourself more clearly?'

"That is very easy,' replied Albert; and the time is come that I should do so.'

"Albert spoke so calmly that we thought the fortunate moment had arrived when his soul should cease to be a melancholy enigma. We pressed around him, and encouraged him by our looks and caresses to open his heart for the first time in his life. He appeared at length inclined to do so, and spoke as follows:—

"You have always looked upon me,' said he, 'and still continue to look upon me, as in ill-health and a madman. Did I not feel for you all infinite respect and affection, I should perhaps have widened the abyss which separates us, and I should have shown you that you are in a world of errors and prejudices, whilst Heaven has given me access to a sphere of light and truth. But you could not understand me without giving up what constitutes your tranquillity, your security, and your creed. When borne away by my enthusiasm, imprudent words escaped me, I soon found I had done you harm in wishing to root up your chimeras and display before your enfeebled eyes the burning flame which I bore about with me. All the details and the habits of your life, all the fibres of your heart, all the springs of your intellect, are so bound up together, so trammelled with falsehood and darkness, that I should but seem to inflict death instead of life. There is a voice, however, which cries to me in watching and in sleep, in calm and in storm, to enlighten and convert you. But I am too loving and too weak a man to undertake it. When I see your eyes fall of tears, your bosoms heave, your foreheads bent down—when I

feel that I bring only sorrow and terror—I fly, I hide myself, to resist the cry of conscience and the commands of destiny. Behold the cause of my illness! Behold my torment, my cross, my suffering. Do you understand me now?’

“My uncle, my aunt, and the chaplain, understood this much—that Albert had ideas of morality and religion totally different from their own; but, timid as devout, they feared to go too far, and dared not encourage his frankness. As to myself, I was only imperfectly acquainted with the peculiarities of his childhood and youth, and I did not at all understand it. Besides, I was at this time, like yourself, Nina, and knew very little of this Hussitism and Lutheranism which I have since heard so much of, whilst the controversies between Albert and the chaplain overwhelmed me with weariness. I expected a more ample explanation, but it did not ensue. ‘I see,’ said Albert, struck with the silence around him, ‘that you do not wish to understand me, for fear of understanding too much. Be it so, then. Your blindness has borne bitter fruits. Ever unhappy, ever alone, a stranger among those I love, I have neither refuge nor stay but in the consolation which has been promised me.’

“‘What is this consolation, my son?’ said Count Christian, deeply afflicted. ‘Could it not come from us? Shall we never understand each other?’

“‘Never, my father; let us love each other, since that alone is allowed. Heaven is my witness, that our vast and irreparable misunderstanding has never diminished the love I bear you.’

“‘And is not that enough?’ said the canoness, taking one hand, while her brother pressed Albert’s other hand in his own. ‘Can you not forget your wild ideas, your strange belief, and live fondly in the midst of us?’

“‘I do not live on affection,’ replied Albert. ‘It is a blessing which produces good or evil, according as our faith is a common one or otherwise. Our hearts are in union, dear Aunt Wenceslawa, but our intellects are at war; and this is a great misfortune for us all. I know it will not end for centuries. Therefore I await the happiness that has been promised me, and which gives me power to hope on.’

“‘What is that happiness, Albert? can you not explain?’

“‘No, for I am myself ignorant of it; but it will come. My mother has never missed a week without announcing it to me in my dreams, and the voices of the forest whisper it back to me, whensoever I interrogate them. An angel often flutters around me, showing me its pale but lustrous countenance above the Stone of Horror, whither, at the time when my contemporaries called me Ziska, I was transported by the indignation of the Lord, and became for the first time the minister of his vengeance—that stone, whereon, when I was called Wratislaw, I saw the mutilated and disfigured head of my father Withold roll beneath the sabre’s edge—horrible expiation, which taught me the meaning of sorrow and of pity—day of fatal remuneration, when the Lutheran blood washed the stain of Catholic blood, and made me a man of tenderness and mercy, instead of the man of fanaticism and horror I had been for a hundred years before.’

“‘Merciful Providence!’ cried my aunt. ‘His madness is coming on him again.’

“‘Do not vex him, sister,’ said Count Christian, making a great effort over himself; ‘suffer him to explain himself. Speak, my son, what has the angel told you about the Rock of Horror?’

“‘He has told me that my consolation was near at hand,’ Albert answered him, with a face radiant with enthusiasm, ‘and that it would descend upon my heart so soon as my twenty-ninth year should be fulfilled.’

“My uncle let his head droop wearily on his breast, for Albert seemed to him to allude to his own death by mentioning the age at which his mother had died; and it seems that she had often predicted, during her malady, that neither herself nor her son should ever attain the age of thirty; for it would seem that my aunt Wanda was somewhat given to supernatural sights also; but I knew nothing precise on the subject. It is too painful a recollection for my uncle, and no one dares to awaken it in his bosom.

“The chaplain then proceeded to make an endeavor at removing the sad thoughts created by this mournful prediction, by inducing Albert to explain himself in regard to the abbe, which was the point from which the conversation had branched off.

“Albert, in his turn, made an effort to reply to him. ‘I talk to you, said he, ‘of things everlasting and divine; you recal me to swift fleeting instants, puerile cares, which I at once forget.’

“‘Speak, my son, nevertheless; let us try at all events this day to comprehend you.’

“‘You never have understood, never will understand me, father, in what you call this life,’ said Albert. ‘But if you would know why I travelled, why I endured that faithless and careless guardian whom you tied to my steps like a greedy and lazy dog to a blind man’s arm, I will tell you, and briefly. I had seen you suffer cruelly. It was necessary to withdraw from your eyes the sight of a son rebellious to your lessons, deaf to your reproaches. I knew that I should never recover of what you termed my insanity, but I desired to give you rest and hope, and withdrew myself voluntarily. You asked my promise that I would not without your consent rid myself of the guide you had given me, and that I would let him conduct me through the world. I was resolved to keep my promise; I wished also that he should keep up your hopes and your tranquillity. I was gentle and enduring, but I closed both heart and ears against him, and he had at least the sense never to attempt the opening them. He led me to walk, dressed me, fed me, as if I were a child. I gave up living as I wished to live; I grew accustomed to see misery, injustice, and madness reign over the earth; I looked on men and their institutions, and indignation made way for pity in my heart, as I perceived that the misery of the oppressed is inferior to that of the oppressors. In my childhood I had no love but for victims; now I learned to compassionate their executioners, unhappy penitents, who undergo in this generation the penalty of crimes committed by them during their previous existences, and whom God has condemned to be wicked, a punishment a thousand times severer than it is to be their innocent prey. It is therefore that I gave no charities any longer, except to rid myself personally of the weight of wealth, without tormenting you by my preachings, knowing now that the time to be happy has not arrived, because, to speak the language of men, the time to be good is yet afar off.’

“‘And now that you are free from this supervisor, as you call him—now that you can live in tranquillity, beyond the sight of miseries which you extinguish, one by one, as they occur around you—now that no one will counteract your generous enthusiasm, will you not make an effort with yourself to repel and conquer your mental agitation?’

"Ask me no further, my beloved parents," replied Albert, "for this day I will speak no word more."

"And he kept his promise; and yet more, for he never unclosed his lips for an entire week."

CHAPTER XXXI

"A FEW words will conclude Albert's history, my dear Porporina, for this reason, that unless I were to repeat what I have already told you, I have but little more to mention. My cousin's whole conduct during the year and a half which I have spent here, has been one continued repetition of the whims and fantasies of which you are now aware. The only exception is, that his pretended recollection of bye-gone ages began to assume a really alarming character of reality, when Albert suddenly manifested a particular and marvellous faculty, of which you have, perhaps, heard tell, but which I certainly had never believed till he gave indubitable proofs of it. This faculty is called, as I learn, second sight in other countries, and those who possess it are often the objects of a sort of religious veneration among superstitious persons. As to me, I know not what to think of it; but I find in it another reason for never becoming the wife of a man who could see all my actions at the distance of a hundred leagues, and who could read my very thoughts. Such a woman should at the very least be a saint; and how should one be such toward a man who seems to be devoted to the devil?"

"You have the faculty," said Consuelo, "of jesting at everything, and I cannot but admire the merriment with which you talk of things that make the very hair stand up on my head. In what does this gift of second sight consist?"

"Albert sees and hears that which no one but he can see or hear. When a person whom he likes is about to arrive here, he announces his coming, and goes forth to meet him an hour before the time. In like manner he retires, and goes and shuts himself up in his own room, when he feels the approach of any one who is disagreeable to him.

"One day when he was walking with my father along the mountain path, he stopped short on a sudden, and made a great circuit over stones and through briars, to avoid a certain spot which did not seem, however, to have any peculiarity. They returned the same way, and, at the expiration of a few minutes, Albert performed the same manœuvre. My father, pretending to have lost something, endeavored to bring him to the foot of a fir tree which appeared to be the object of his repugnance. Not only, however, did Albert avoid approaching it, but took pains not so much as to tread upon the shadow which the tree projected across the road; and while my father crossed and recrossed the spot, he showed a disturbance and agony of mind that were really remarkable. At length, when my father stopped close to the foot of the tree, Albert uttered an outcry, and called him back hastily. It was a long time, however, before he could be induced to explain this whim, and it was only when completely overcome by the prayers of the whole family, that he declared this tree to be the mark

of a burial place, and asserted that a great crime had been committed there.

"The chaplain thought that if Albert was cognizant of any murder committed in that place, it was *his* duty to be informed of it, in order to give Christian burial to those abandoned relics of humanity.

"*'Beware what you shall do,'* said Albert, with the melancholy and sarcastic expression which he sometimes assumes. *'The man, woman and child whom you will find there, were Hussites, and it is the drunkard, Wenceslawa, who caused them to be slaughtered by his soldiers, one night when he was hiding in the woods, and expected to be observed or betrayed by them.'*"

"No more was said on the subject to my cousin; but my uncle, who was anxious to discover whether this was merely fancy on his part, or a species of inspiration, caused the place to be explored by night, and the skeletons of a man, a woman and a child were there discovered. The man was covered by one of those enormous wooden shields worn by the Hussites, which are easy to be recognised by the chalice which is engraved upon them, with this device around them in Latin—"O, death,* how bitter is the memory of thee to the unjust—how quiet and calm to the man, all whose actions are ordered rightly, and with a view to this end."

"These bones were removed and re-interred in a different part of the forest; and when Albert passed several times close to the foot of the fir tree, my father observed that he had not the least repugnance to walking over the spot, although it had been carefully filled up as before with sand and stones, so that no traces were left of what had occurred. He did not even remember the emotion which he had testified, and had some trouble in recalling it to mind when mentioned to him.

"*'You must be mistaken, father,'* he said, *'and it must have been in some other place that I was warned. I am certain that there is nothing here. For I have neither chill nor pain, nor trembling of my body.'*

"My aunt is much inclined to ascribe this poetic power to the especial favor of Providence. But Albert is so gloomy, so unhappy, and suffers so much from it, that it is difficult to conceive to what end Providence should have endowed him with a gift so fatal.

"If I believed in the existence of the devil, the chaplain's suggestion would leave it on far more reasonable grounds, who lays all Albert's hallucinations to his charge. My uncle Christian, who is a man of more sense and firmness in his religious views, sees for all these things explanations which are probable enough on common-sense considerations. He thinks that, notwithstanding all the pains the Jesuits took for so many years, after the Thirty Years' War, in forming all the heretics in Bohemia, and especially in the vicinity of the Giant's Castle,—in spite of the close investigation made in every nook after the death of my aunt Wanda, there must have remained in some corner, of which no one was aware, some historical documents which have been found by Albert—that the reading of those unlucky papers must have taken strange effect on his diseased imagination—and that he attributes, unconsciously of the self-deceit, to those wonderful memories of a prior existence on earth, the impression which he has received from documents now wholly unknown,

which he, nevertheless, repeats with the minute details and close connection of historic chronicles. By these means are easily accounted for all the strange tales he tells us, as well as his disappearance for days and weeks together; for it is right to tell you that these disappearances have several times recurred, and that it is impossible to suppose that he spends the time out of the castle. Whenever he has disappeared it has proved utterly impossible to discover him, and we are certain that no peasant has ever given him either food or shelter. We know also that he has fits of lethargy which keep him confined to his chamber for whole days; and when the doors are forced, or any disturbance is made about him, he falls into convulsions so that great care is now taken not to disturb him. Free scope is now given to his lethargic seizures, during which extraordinary things seem to pass through his mind; but no sound, no outward agitation, betray them, and it is from his conversation only that we learn their character. When he recovers, he is calmer and more reasonable for a few days, but by degrees his agitation returns, and goes on increasing until the recurrence of his seizure, the period and duration of which he appears to foresee; for when they are long, he either retires to some distant place, or takes refuge in his hiding place, which we imagine must be some vault of the castle, or some cavern in this mountain, known to himself alone. Up to this time, it has been impossible to discover him, which is the more difficult that he will not endure to be watched, and that to be followed, observed, or even seriously questioned, renders him seriously ill. Thus the plan has been adopted of leaving him entirely free, and we have now accustomed ourselves to regard these disappearances, which were at first so fearfully alarming, as favorable crises in his malady; when they come about, my aunt is miserable, and my uncle prays, but no one stirs; and as for me, I confess that I have become very much hardened on this account. Vexation has brought in its train weariness and disgust. I should prefer death to marriage with this maniac. I admit his noble qualities; but, although you may think that I ought to pay no regard to his fantasies, I confess that I am irritated by them as the torment of my life, and of my whole family."

"That seems to me a little unjust, my dear baroness," said Consuelo. "How repugnant soever you may feel to becoming the wife of Count Albert, I can well conceive; but how you should lose all interest in him, is beyond my comprehension."

"It is because I cannot avoid believing that there is something voluntary in this man's madness. It is certain that he has great strength of character; and on a thousand occasions, he has much command over himself. He has the power of retarding, when he chooses it, the approach of these attacks. I have seen him master them with great power when persons seemed indisposed to treat them seriously. On the contrary, when he sees us disposed to credulity or fear, he seems to desire, by his extravagances, to produce an effect upon us, and he abuses our weakness toward him. It is on this account that I feel bitterly toward him, and often ask Beelzebub, his patron, to come and rid us of him, once for all."

"These are very cruel jokes," said Consuelo, "to be used concerning a man so unhappy, and one whose affliction seems to me romantic and poetical, rather than marvellous or repulsive."

"Take it as you please, my dear Porporina," resumed Amelia. "Admire his sorceries as much as you please, but I do as our chaplain

does, who commends his soul to God, and seeks not to comprehend I take shelter in the bosom of reason, and do not attempt to explain to myself that which, I doubt not, has a very simple explanation, though it is utterly unknown to all of us at present. The only thing that is certain about my unfortunate cousin is, that his reason has completely packed its baggage—that his imagination has unfolded within his brain wings so wide, that the case is bursting with their expansion. And, since I must speak out clearly and say the word which my poor uncle Christian was compelled to utter in tears at the feet of the Empress Maria Theresa, who will not be satisfied with half answers, or half affirmations, in three words, ‘Albert Rudolstadt is mad—deranged,’ if you think that a more genteel expression.”

Consuelo replied only by a deep sigh. Amelia appeared to her at that moment a hateful and iron-hearted person. She strove to excuse her in her own eyes, by conjuring up to herself all that she must have suffered during eighteen months of a life so sad, yet filled with emotions so strange and varied. Then recollecting her own misfortunes—“Ah!” she said to herself, “why cannot I lay the blame of Anzoletto’s faults to madness. Had he fallen into delirium in the midst of the intoxications and deceptions of his debut, I feel, for my own part, that I should have loved him no less; and I should only ask to know that his infidelity and ingratitude arose from frenzy, to adore him as before, and to fly to his succor.”

Some days elapsed without Albert’s manner, conversation, or demeanor, giving the slightest confirmation to his cousin’s assertions, relative to the derangement of his intellect. But, on a day when the chaplain chanced unintentionally to cross him, he began talking incoherently, and then, as if he became himself aware of it, left the drawing-room abruptly, and went away to shut himself up in the seclusion of his own chamber. All expected that he would remain there some time; but within an hour he returned, pale and disordered, moved himself languidly from chair to chair, and kept hovering around Consuelo, although he did not appear to take any more notice of her than usual. At length he retreated to the embrasure of a window, in which he sat down with his face buried in his hands, and so continued wholly motionless.

It was now about the time at which Amelia was used to take her music lesson, and she now desired to do so, as she whispered to Consuelo, if it were only for the purpose of driving away that ill-omened face, which banished all her gaiety, and seemed, as she said in her fancy, to fill the very room with odors of the grave. “I think,” said Consuelo, in answer to her, “that we shall do better to go up to your room, where we can make your spinet serve us for accompaniment. If it be true that music is disagreeable to Count Albert, to what end increase his disturbance, and by that means the sufferings of his parents?” And to this consideration Amelia having yielded, they went up together to her chamber, the door of which they left ajar, because there was some smoke in the room. Amelia wanted to have her own way, as usual, and to sing loud, showy cavatinas; but this time Consuelo showed that she was in earnest, and made her try some very simple movements and some serious passages from Pales-tina’s sacred songs. The young baroness began to yawn, grew fretful, and declared that the music was barbarous, and would put her to sleep.

“That is because you do not understand it,” replied Consuelo.

"Suffer me to sing you a few airs, to show you how admirably it is adapted for the voice, in addition to the grandeur and sublimity of its thoughts and suggestions."

She seated herself at the spinet, and began to sing. It was the first time she had awakened the echoes of the old chateau, and she found the bare and lofty walls so admirably adapted for sound, that she gave herself up entirely to the pleasure which she experienced. Her voice, long mute, since the last evening when she sang at San Samuel—that evening when she fainted, broken down by fatigue and sorrow—instead of being impaired by so much suffering and agitation, was more beautiful, more marvelous, more thrilling than ever. Amelia was at the same time transported and affrighted. She was at length beginning to understand that she did not know anything, and that perhaps she could never learn anything, when the pale and pensive figure of Albert suddenly appeared in the middle of the apartment, in front of the two young girls, and remained motionless and apparently deeply moved until the end of the piece. It was only then that Consuelo perceived him, and was somewhat frightened. But Albert, falling on his knees, and raising towards her his large dark eyes, swimming in tears, exclaimed in Spanish, without the least German accent, "O Consuelo! Consuelo! I have at last found thee!"

"Consuelo?" cried the astonished girl, expressing herself in the same language, "Why, señor, do you call me by that name?"

"I call you Consolation," replied Albert, still speaking in Spanish, "because a consolation has been promised to my desolate life, and because you are that consolation which God at last grants to my solitary and gloomy existence."

"I did not think," said Amelia, with suppressed rage, "that music could have produced so prodigious an effect on my dear cousin. Nina's voice is formed to accomplish wonders, I confess; but I may remark to both of you, that it would be more polite towards me, and more according to general etiquette, to use a language which I can understand."

Albert appeared not to have heard a word of what his betrothed had said. He continued kneeling, and looking at Consuelo, with eyes beaming with delight and wonder, and reiterated in a soft, low tone the words, "Consuelo! Consuelo!"

"What is this name that he is calling you?" asked Amelia of her companion, somewhat angrily.

"He is asking me," replied Consuelo, now a good deal embarrassed, for a Spanish air with which I am unacquainted; and I think, moreover, that we had better stop where we are, for the music appears to affect him to-day far too strongly." And with these words she arose to leave the room.

"Consuelo," repeated Albert, in the Spanish tongue, "if you depart from me, my life is over, and I will never return to the earth for evermore." And as he spoke thus he fell at her feet and fainted, while the two frightened girls called servants to his aid, who carried him away to his own room.

CHAPTER XXXII.

COUNT ALBERT was gently deposited on his own bed, while two of the servants who had brought him thither, went in search of the chaplain, who was in some sort the family physician, and for Count Christian, who had left directions that he should be informed of the slightest affection of his son, while the young ladies set off to find the canoness. Before, however, any one of these several persons had returned to his bed, though each and all made the best speed, Albert had disappeared. His door was discovered open, his bed scarcely disarranged by the momentary repose which he had taken upon it, and his chamber in its accustomed order. He was sought for everywhere, as was always the case when events of this nature occurred. He was nowhere to be found; whereupon the family at once relapsed into one of those states of gloomy resignation which had been described to Consuelo by Amelia, and all appeared to be awaiting, in that dumb consternation, the expression of which they no longer sought to conceal, the return, rather to be hoped for than expected, of the young and extraordinary baron.

Although Consuelo would have desired to make no allusion to his parents of the singular scene which had been transacted in the chamber of the young baroness, the latter failed not to recount to them, in the warmest and most vivid colors, the instantaneous and potent effect which Porporina's song had produced on her cousin. "It is then very certain that music has a bad effect on him," observed the chaplain.

"If that be the case," Consuelo answered him, "I will take good heed that he shall not hear me: and when I shall be at work with our young baroness, we shall take heed to shut ourselves up so closely that no sound may by chance reach the ears of Count Albert."

"It will be very irksome to you, my dear young lady," said the canoness. "Ah! it is not in my power to render your sojourn here agreeable to you."

"I am willing to participate both in your sorrows and your pleasures; and I seek no other satisfaction than that of being permitted to share in both, through your confidence and friendship."

"You are a noble girl," the canoness made answer, offering her long and emaciated hand to her pressure; "but listen to me, I am of opinion that music is not in reality injurious to my dear Albert. According to what I have gathered from Amelia of this morning's scene, I judge contrariwise—that he was too powerfully delighted. It may even be that his illness was occasioned by the too sudden suspension of your admirable melodies. What said he to you in Spanish? That is a tongue which he speaks thoroughly, as I am told, with many others which he acquired during his travels with prodigious quickness. If asked how he retains in memory so many languages, he replies, that he knew them before he was born, and remembers them—this one, because he spoke it twelve hundred years ago—that, when he was at the crusades, or I know not where. Alas! you will hear strange narratives of his anterior existences, as he calls them. But translate for me into our German language, which you already speak so well, the meaning of what he said to you in your language, which none of us knows."

Consuelo was for a moment embarrassed to a point which she could not explain, even to herself. She determined, however, to tell nearly the whole truth, explaining that Count Albert had begged her to remain with him, declaring that she afforded him exceeding consolation.

"Consolation!" said Amelia, who was not lacking in quickness. "Did he use that word? You know, aunt, the peculiar signification which he attaches to that word."

"Truly it is a word which he uses often," said Wenceslawa, "and to which he appears to attach a prophetic meaning; but I do not see any reason for applying any other than its ordinary meaning to the use of it, on that occasion."

"But what means the word which he repeated to you so often, dear Porporina," persisted Amelia. "I thought he used one word very often, though in my agitation I lost its sound."

"I did not understand it myself," said Consuelo, not speaking falsely without an effort.

"My dear Nina," Amelia whispered to her, "you are as quick as you are prudent. I am not myself quite an idiot, and I perfectly comprehend that you are the mystical consolation promised to Albert by the vision, during his thirtieth year. Do not endeavor to conceal from me that you have understood it as I—for I assure you I am in nowise envious of a mission so celestial."

"Listen to me, dear Porporina," interposed the canoness, who had been musing for a minute or two. "It has ever been a fancy of ours that when Albert disappears from us, as I might say magically, he is hidden not far from us, perhaps in this very house, in some secret place known to himself alone. I know not why, but I have an idea that were you to sing now, he might hear you and return to us."

"Could I but suppose so," said Consuelo, doubtfully.

"Suppose, however, if Albert be so near us, that music augments his delirium," interposed Amelia, who was really jealous.

"At all events," exclaimed Count Christian, "it is an experiment that must be tried. I have heard that Farinelli had a charm in his song to dissipate the black melancholy of the King of Spain, as had young David to appease the fury of Saul by the witchery of his harp. Make the trial, then, Porporina; a soul so pure as yours can have none but beneficent influences on all around."

Consuelo, who was now touched, sat down at the piano and began to sing a Spanish canticle in honor of our Lady of Consolation, which her mother had taught her in her childhood, beginning with the words "*Consuelo de mi alma—O solace of my soul,*" &c. She sang it so purely and with so marked an accent of piety, that the owner of the old manor-house almost forgot the subject of their anxieties in the sentiments of faith and hope which the music excited within them. Deep silence dwelt within and without the castle wall; the doors and windows had been thrown open, in order to give its widest and fullest scope to the voice of Consuelo, and the moon was pouring her pale bluish lustre through the embrasures of the large windows. All was calm; and a sort of serenity of soul had succeeded to despair in the hearts of all—when a deep long sigh, like that of a human being, was heard at the close of Consuelo's last tones. That sigh was so long drawn and so well defined, that every person present heard it, even the Baron Frederick, who startled from his dose and half awoke, as if he had been suddenly called. Every one turned pale, and all gazed

each at the other, as if to say—"It is not I; is it you who did that?"—and Consuelo, who fancied that the sigh was uttered close beside her at the piano, though she sat apart from all the family, was so terrified that literally she could not speak.

"Mercy of heaven!" cried the canoness aghast; "seemed not that sigh to exhale from the bowels of the earth?"

"Say rather, aunt," exclaimed Amelia, "seemed it not to pass over our heads like the night-wind?"

"Perhaps some screech-owl, attracted by the lights, flitted through the room while we were all suspended on the music, and we caught the rustle of his pinions as he passed through the windows." Such was the chaplain's explanation, but for all that, his teeth chattered with very fear.

"Perhaps it is Albert's dog!" said the Count Christian.

"Cynabre is not here," replied Amelia; "Wherever Albert is, Cynabre is with him there. Some one hereabout, undoubtedly, sighed strangely. If I were not afraid of going to the window, I would go and see if some one be not listening in the garden; but were my life at stake, I have not strength to do it."

"For a person so free from all prejudice," said Consuelo with a low voice and a forced smile; "for one boasting herself a little French philosopher, you are not very courageous, dear baroness. I will see if I cannot prove myself more so."

"Do not try it, my dear," answered Amelia aloud; "and don't affect to be brave, for you are as pale as death now, and you will be ill the next thing."

"What silly whims you indulge in, my dear Amelia," answered Count Christian, directing his steps firmly and gravely to the open window.—"There is no one," he said, after looking out; and then added, after shutting the casement—"it seems to me that real ailments are not keen enough for the excited fancies of women; and that they must always add the creatures of their own brains to real sorrows which need no addition. There is assuredly nothing mysterious in that sigh. Some one of us, moved by the signora's fine singing, probably without self-consciousness, uttered that deep-brown aspiration. Perhaps it is I who did so, yet I know it not. Ah Porporina, though you succeed not in curing Albert, at the least you have discovered how to pour a heavenly balm into wounds as deeply seated as his own."

The words of this good old man, who was ever calm and self-restrained amid the deepest domestic troubles, were in themselves in some sort a healing balm, and as such Consuelo felt them. She felt almost inclined to cast herself on her knees before him, and implore his benediction, such a benediction as she had received from Porpora before leaving him, and from Marcell, on that brightest day of her existence, which had been to her but the beginning of an unbroken series of misfortunes.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

SEVERAL days passed over without their hearing any news of Count Albert; and Consuelo, to whom this position of things appeared dismal in the extreme, was astonished to see the Rudolstadt family bear so frightful a state of uncertainty without evincing either despair or much impatience. Familiarity with the most cruel anxieties, produce a sort of apparent apathy, or else real hardness of heart, which wounds and almost irritates those minds whose sensibility has not yet been blunted by long-continued misfortune. Consuelo, subject to a sort of nightmare in the midst of these doleful impressions and inexplicable occurrences, was astonished to see that the order of the house was hardly disturbed, that the canoness was equally vigilant, the baron equally eager for the chase, the chaplain regular as ever in the same devotional exercises, and Amelia gay and trifling as usual. The cheerful vivacity of the latter was what particularly offended Consuelo. She could not conceive how the baroness could laugh and play, while she herself could hardly read or work with her needle. The canoness, however, employed herself in embroidering an altar front for the chapel of the castle. It was a masterpiece of patience, exquisite workmanship, and neatness. Hardly had she made the tour of the house, when she returned to seat herself at her work, were it only to add a few stitches, while waiting to be called by new cares to the barns; the kitchens, or the cellars. One should have seen with how much importance these little concerns were treated, and how that fragile being was hurried along, at a pace always regular, always dignified and measured, but never slackened, through all the corners of her little empire; crossing a thousand times daily in all possible directions the narrow and monotonous surface of her domestic demesnes. What also seemed strange to Consuelo was the respect and admiration which the family and country in general attached to this indefatigable housekeeping—a pursuit, which the old lady seemed to have embraced with such ardor and jealous observance. To see her parsimoniously regulating the most trivial affairs, one would have thought her covetous and distrustful; and yet on important occasions she displayed a soul deeply imbued with noble and generous sentiments. But these excellent qualities, especially her motherly affections, which gave her in Consuelo's eyes so sympathizing and venerable an air, would not of themselves have been sufficient in the eyes of others to elevate her to the rank of the heroine of the family. She required, besides, the far more important qualification of a scrupulous attention to the trifling details of the household, to cause her to be appreciated for what she really was, notwithstanding what has been said, a woman of strong sense and high moral feeling. Not a day passed that Count Christian, the baron, or the chaplain, did not repeat every time she turned her back, "How much wisdom, how much courage, how much strength of mind does the canoness display!" Amelia herself, not distinguishing the true and ennobling purpose of life, in the midst of puerilities which, under another form, constituted the whole of hers, did not venture to disparage her aunt under this point of view, the only one that, in Consuelo's eyes, cast a shadow upon the bright light which shone from the pure and loving soul of the hunchback Wenceslawa. To the *zingarella*, born upon the

highway and thrown helpless on the world without any other master or any other protection than her own genius, so much care, so much activity and intensity of thought to produce such miserable results as the preservation and maintenance of certain objects and certain provisions, appeared an absurd perversion of human intelligence. She who possessed none and desired none of the world's riches, was grieved to see a lovely and generous soul suffer itself to be absorbed wholly in the business of looking after wheat, wine, wood, hemp, cattle, and furniture. If they had offered her all these goods, so much desired by the greater part of mankind, she would have asked, instead, a moment of her former happiness, her rags, the clear and lovely sky above her head, her fresh young love and her liberty upon the lagunes of Venice—all that was stamped on her memory in more and more glowing colors, in proportion as she receded from that gay and laughing horizon to penetrate into the frozen sphere which is called real life!

She felt her heart sink in her bosom when at nightfall she saw the old canoness, followed by Hans, take an immense bunch of keys, and make the circuit of all the buildings and all the courts, closing the least openings, and examining the smallest recesses into which an evil-doer could have crept; as if no one could sleep in security within those formidable walls, until the water of the torrent, which was restrained behind a neighboring dam came rushing and roaring into the trenches of the chateau, whilst in addition the gates were locked and the draw-bridge raised. Consuelo had so often slept, in her distant wanderings by the roadside, with no covering save her mother's torn cloak thrown over her for shelter! She had so often welcomed the dawn upon the snowy flagstones of Venice, washed by the waves, without having a moment's fear for her modesty, the only wealth she cared to preserve! "Alas!" said she, "how unhappy are these people in having so many things to take care of! Security is the aim of their pursuits by day and night, and so carefully do they seek it, that they have no time to find or enjoy it." Like Amelia, therefore, she already pined in her gloomy prison—that dark and sombre Castle of the Giants, where the sun himself seemed afraid to penetrate. But while the young baroness only thought of fetes, of dresses, and whispering suitors, Consuelo dreamt of wandering beside her native wave-washed shores—a thicket or a fisher-boat for her palace, the boundless heavens for her covering, and the starry firmament to gaze on!

Forced by the cold of the climate, and the closing of the castle gates, to change the Venetian custom which she had retained, of watching during a part of the night, and rising late in the morning, she at last succeeded, after many hours of sleeplessness, agitation, and melancholy dreams, in submitting to the austere law of the cloister, and recompensed herself by undertaking, alone, several morning walks in the neighboring mountain. The gates were opened and the bridges lowered at the first dawn of day, and while Amelia, secretly occupied in reading novels during one half the night, slept until awakened by the first breakfast bell, Porporina sallied forth to breathe the fresh air, and brush the early dew from the herbage of the forest. One morning, as she descended softly on tiptoe, in order to awaken no one, she mistook the direction she ought to take, among the numberless staircases and interminable corridors of the chateau, of which she had not yet informed herself. Embarrassed in a maze of galleries and passages, she passed through a sort of antechamber, which she

had never seen before, still expecting to find a way through it into the garden. But she merely reached the entrance of a little chapel, built in a beautiful but antique style, and dimly lighted from above by a circular window of stained glass in the vaulted ceiling, which threw a feeble light upon the centre of the pavement, and left the extremities of the building in mysterious gloom. The sun was still below the horizon, and the morning grey and foggy. At first, Consuelo thought herself in the chapel of the château, where she had heard mass the preceding Monday. She knew that the chapel opened upon the gardens; but before crossing it to go out, she wished to honor the sanctuary of prayer, and knelt upon the first step of the altar. But, as it often happens to artists to be preoccupied with outward objects in spite of their attempts to ascend into the sphere of abstract ideas, her prayer could not absorb her sufficiently to prevent her casting a glance of curiosity around her; and she soon perceived that she was not in the chapel, but in a place to which she had not before penetrated. It was neither the same shrine nor the same ornaments. Although this unknown chapel was very small, she could hardly as yet distinguish objects around her; but what struck Consuelo most was a marble statue kneeling before the altar, in that cold and severe attitude in which all figures on tombs were formerly represented. She concluded that she was in a place reserved for the sepulchres of some distinguished ancestors, and having become somewhat fearful and superstitious since her residence in Bohemia, she shortened her prayer, and rose to retire.

But just as she was turning a last half-timid glance toward the kneeling statue which was scarce ten paces distant, she saw the marble figure unclasp its stony fingers, and make the sign of the cross.

Consuelo was on the point of fainting, yet she lacked power to withdraw her glaring eyes from that horrible statue. What held her firm in the conviction that it was but a statue, was perceiving that it did not hear the outcry which broke from her lips, and that it again folded its massive white hands, all unconscious in appearance of any exterior world.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

HAD the ingenious and imaginative Anne Radcliffe found herself in the place of the candid and unskilful narrator of this true narrative, she would not have allowed so good an opportunity to escape, of conducting you, fair reader, through corridors, trap-doors, winding staircases, and subterranean passages, through half-a-dozen flowery and attractive volumes, to reveal to you only at the seventh, all the mysteries of her skilful labors. But the unsuperstitious reader, whom it is for me to entertain, would not probably lend herself so willingly at the present period, to the innocent stratagem of the romancer. Besides, as it might be difficult to make her believe them, we will give her the key to all our mysteries, as quickly as we can. And to explain two of them at once, we will confess that Consuelo, after some moments of self-collectedness, recognised, in the animated statue before her eyes, the old Count Christian, who was mentally reciting his morning prayers in his oratory, and in the sigh of compunction

which unconsciously escaped from him, the same mysterious sigh which she thought she had heard close beside her, on the evening when she sang the hymn to Our Lady of Consolation.

A little ashamed of her fears, Consuelo remained rooted to her place by veneration, and a dislike to interrupt a prayer so fervent. Nothing could be more solemn or more touching than to behold that old man, prostrate upon the stone pavement, offering his heart to God at the opening of the day, and steeped in a kind of heavenly ecstasy, which appeared to close his senses to all perception of the outward world. His noble features did not betray any emotion of grief. A gentle breeze, penetrating by the door which Consuelo had left open, agitated the semi-circle of silvery hair which still remained upon the back part of his head, and his massive brow, bald to the very crown, wore the lustrous yellowish hue of antique marble. Clad in an old-fashioned morning-gown of white flannel, falling about his slender frame like the frock of a monk, in stiff and massive draperies, gave him a certain resemblance to a monumental statue, so that Consuelo had to look at him twice after he had resumed his fixed attitude, to assure herself that her first impression was illusory.

After gazing at him attentively for a while, and changing her own position so as to see him in a better light, she inquired of her own heart, half unwittingly, still touched and imbued with veneration, whether such prayer as this old man put up to heaven could really be efficacious to the recovery of his hapless son, and whether a spirit so passively subjected to dogmatic rules, could at any time possess the warmth, the appreciation and the zealous love which Albert looked to find within the soul of his father. There was something mystical in the very soul of Albert. He also had led a life of devotion and contemplation, but according to all that Consuelo had heard from Amelia, according to all that she had beheld herself, since her abode in the castle, Albert had ever lacked the counsellor, the guide and the friend, who might have directed his imagination aright, softened the over-excitement of his feelings, and turned to tenderness the rugged fervor of his austere virtue. She saw that of necessity he must have felt himself alone among a family resolute either to contradict, or silently to pity him as either heretic or madman; she even felt something of the kind herself, in the half impatience which arose within her at sight of that impassive and interminable prayer put up to Heaven, as if for the purpose of casting upon Heaven the cares which it was for those, who prayed, inactive, to take themselves in the search after the fugitive, his recovery, his persuasion, and his restoration to reason. For there must, she thought, be some deep-rooted despair, to wrench a young man, so affectionate and kindly-natured, from the bosom of his friends, to render him altogether self-forgetful, and even to destroy within him the knowledge of the uneasiness and sorrow which his conduct must needs cause to his nearest and his dearest.

The course which they had fallen upon of never arguing with him, and of affecting calmness while feeling consternation, seemed to the firm and well-balanced mind of the girl either a culpable piece of neglect or a blunder the most obvious. She saw in it something of that peculiar pride and self-conceit which is imposed by a narrow and intolerant crowd on people who consent to wear the bands of self-righteousness, and who can see but one road to heaven, and that traced by the undeviating finger of the priest.

"Heavenly powers!" exclaimed Consuelo, half praying mentally;

"Is it possible that the expansive, ardent, charitable soul of Albert, devoid as it is of human passions, can be less acceptable in your sight than those patient and slothful spirits which submit themselves to the injustice of the world, and see truth and justice daily violated on this earth? Could he be acting under Satanic inspiration, who when a child at the first dawning of intellect, gave his toys and decorations to the children of poverty? and who, when early reflection began to mature, would have abandoned all his wealth for the consolation of human suffering? And can these mild and gentle nobles, who deplore the woes of others with barren tears, or solace them with ineffective griefs, be wise in the belief that they are gaining heaven by mere prayers and acts of submission to the Emperor or the Pope, rather than by great works and greater sacrifices? No, Albert is not a madman. A voice cries to me from the bottom of my heart that he is the finest type of a good, just man that ever had its being from the hands of Nature. If he have his painful visions, if fantastic ideas have obscured his reason—if even, as they suppose, he be deranged, it is blind contradiction, it is the craving for sympathy—it is the loneliness of the heart, that have brought him to a condition deplorable. Have not I seen the cell in which Tasso was immured for a madman, and felt that what they called madness might have been but the indignation of genius burning beneath oppression? Have not I heard in the saloons of Venice the august saints and martyrs of Christianity treated as fools and madmen—they whose histories called forth my tears and awoke wild musings in my childhood? And what right have these folk, this pious old man, this timid canoness, who believe, nevertheless, in the miracles of saints and the genius of poets, to pronounce on their child a sentence of shame and reprobation which should attach to knaves and weak fools only? Mad! no. But madness is horrible, repulsive—it must be God's judgment on great crimes. How should a man become mad by excess of virtue? And were it so, I should deem the being, bowed beneath the weight of a misery so unmerited, entitled to the respect no less than to the pity of men; and had I become mad—had I blasphemed when I became awake to Anzoletto's infidelity, should I have lost all right to the encouragement and spiritual support of Christians? Would they have cast me out, or let me die in the street saying—"There is no help for her, through over-misery she has lost her reason?" Yet it is thus they treat this hapless Albert. They feed him, clothe him, tend him, render him, in fact, the alms of a puerile affection. They converse not with him—if he question, they hold silence; if he seeks to persuade, they bow the head, or turn away from him in horror. When his very disgust of solitude, drives him into solitudes deeper yet, they await his return, praying God to watch over him and to bring him back to them safe and sound, as though the ocean rolled between him and the objects of his affection. And yet they believe he is not far off—they call on me to sing in order to awaken him, as though he slept a lethargic sleep in the thickness of some wall, or within the cavity of some huge hollow tree. And yet they have neither explored the secrets of this antique dwelling, nor hollowed out the entrails of this cavernous rocky region. Ah! were I Albert's aunt or father, I would not have left stone on stone until I had recovered him; not a tree should have stood erect in the forest till he had been restored to my arms."

Absorbed in sad musings, Consuelo had issued noiselessly from

Count Christian's oratory—had found, she knew not how, the gate into the country. She wandered among the forest paths, seeking the wildest and most intricate, led by romantic heroism, and burning with the desire of finding Albert.

Yet in all this, there was nothing of vulgar attraction, or imprudent fantasy prompting her to do this. It was not the handsome and enthusiastic youth, whom she sought to encounter, but the hapless noble, whom she hoped to save or at least to soothe; as she would have done for an old and hapless hermit, or as a child which had strayed from its mother. She mused, and undertook her pilgrimage, as Joan of Arc mused, and undertook to deliver her country. Nor did she dream that such a project would be regarded with ridicule, or that Amelia herself, led by the cry of kinship, would have failed to attempt or succeed in the same.

She walked on rapidly, undeterred by any obstacle. The silence of the mighty woods neither saddened nor alarmed her spirits. She saw the slot of wolves in the sand, yet felt no apprehensions of their gaunt and famished pack. She fancied herself impelled by a protecting hand from heaven. Knowing Tasso by heart, so often had she sung him whole nights through on the lagunes, she fancied herself sheltered by a talisman, as the noble Ubaldo in search of Rinaldo through the perils of the enchanted forest. Swift and light-footed she passed through briars, over rocks, her eyes beaming and her cheeks glowing with a sort of secret pride. Never in her days of scenic heroism had she looked handsomer, yet she thought no more of herself at this instant than she did when she trod the boards of the theatre.

From time to time she paused to think and recollect herself; doubting what she should do in case of meeting him; conscious that she knew nothing of the deep mysteries which disturbed him; aware that she saw but dimly through a poetic veil, and with eyes dazzled by these novel visions. Again she felt something more than ardor and devotion to bring back to the society of the common-place people among whom he had lived a man so superior to herself, a madman so wise and learned, while she knew herself to lack the eloquence, the learning to persuade so singular a being. She went, however, confident that heaven would inspire her at the moment of need, and though convinced that she was destitute of historic and religious lore she was yet convinced that there was more power, as she half whispered to herself, in the resolution of her own sympathizing heart, than in all the studied doctrine of his parent, kind and gentle as they were, yet undecided and cold as the mists on the snow-wreaths of their native mountains.

CHAPTER XXXV.

AFTER going and returning many times to and fro amid the winding paths of that wilderness, scattered at random over a hilly and broken district, she came at length upon an elevation, so covered with splintered rocks and ruined walls, that it was not easy to discern whether the hand of man or of time had been the most destructive. It was no more now than a hill of fragments, where once had stood a

village, burned by the orders of the terrible blind man, the dread Calixtin chief, John Ziska, from whom Albert imagined himself to be descended, and perhaps was so in reality. During a dark and gloomy night, so ran the tale, that fierce and indefatigable warrior, having given orders to his troops to attack the Giant's Castle, then garrisoned for the king of Saxony, had heard one of his soldiers exclaim angrily, "that cursed blind man fancies that every one can do without daylight as well as himself," whereat, turning to one of his disciples who drew his ear, enquired according to the guidance of memory, or that instinct which directed him in lieu of the other senses, "Is there not a village hereaway?" and being answered in the affirmative, he desired the mutinous soldier to go at once and fire the village, telling him that the flames would give ample light by which to manoeuvre and to fight. The terrible order was given and executed, and aided by the glare of the burning village, the Taborites stormed the Giant's Castle, and Ziska was in quiet possession of it before the morning. On the following day, at dawn, he was informed that in the midst of the ruins of the burnt village, there was standing on a sort of a platform, whence the soldiers had observed the attack of the fortress, a young and thriving oak, not a leaf of which had been withered by the heat, having escaped destruction, as it would seem, owing to its roots being watered by a deep cistern beneath its shade.

"I know the cistern well," cried Ziska. "Ten of our people were drowned in it; and since that day the stone which covers it never has been raised. Well, let it remain, and serve them for a monument, since we are not of those who believe that souls perish because the bodies rot in unconsecrated ground. Let the bones of our brothers rot where they lie, since their souls are alive, and doing battle for us, though we see them not. For the inhabitants of the village, they have received their punishment; for the oak, it has been preserved for another destiny than giving shade to miscreants. We have need of a gallows; bring me the twenty Augustin monks whom we took in their convent yesterday, and hang them high on the branches of the brave oak. That ornament will give it all its ancient health."

It was done as quickly as commanded, and from that day the oak was named the *Hussite*, the stone over the cistern, the *Stone of Terror*, and the ruined village on the deserted hill, the *Shreckenstein*. Consuelo had already heard this tale of horror from the Baroness Amelia, with all its terrible details; but, since hitherto she had seen it only from a distance, save during the night of her arrival at the castle, she would not have recognized it, had she not discovered on casting her eyes downward into the deep ravine, through which wound the high road, the fragments of the thunderstricken oak, which no villager or vassal of the castle had dared to remove, owing to the superstitious awe which had attached for centuries to that monument of horror, that contemporary of the fierce John Ziska.

The predictions and visions of Count Albert had also invested the place with a touching and tragic character, so that even Consuelo felt a thrill of terror as she found herself seated on that *Stone of Terror* so unexpectedly. Nor was her alarm wholly groundless, for, since in the belief not only of Albert, but of all the mountaineers, the hill was invested with strange terrors and haunted by terrible apparitions. Close as it was to the castle, the *Shreckenstein* was often the haunt of wild beasts, safe from the pursuit not only of the hunters by profession, but even of Count Frederick and of his trusty henchmen.

The impassive baron cared not, it is true, much for the demons which were held to haunt the spot; but he did dread, in his own peculiar line, a pernicious influence which he believed to threaten all dogs which drank of the clear rills which burst out on all sides from the rocky hill, issuing probably from the dreaded cistern, that ancient burial place of the Hussites. So that he sternly recalled his greyhound Sapphyr, or his double-nosed Pankin, whensoever they invaded the neighborhood of the *Schreckenstein*.

Ashamed, however, of her own weakness, Consuelo determined on the instant to conquer it, and resolved as a duty to sit a moment longer on the fatal stone, and to retire from it only with the slow pace becoming a determined spirit. But just as she withdrew her gaze from the blasted oak, which lay perhaps a hundred feet below her in the gorge, to look on nearer objects, she perceived that she was no longer alone on the *Stone of Terror*, but that a strange figure had seated itself beside her, without giving token of its approach by the slightest sound.

It was a round, gaping head, moving to and fro, on a deformed body, lean and distorted as that of a grasshopper, covered with an indescribable costume belonging to no date or country, and so dilapidated as to be more than slovenly. The figure was still in no degree alarming beyond its strangeness, and the suddenness of its appearance, for it showed no symptoms of hostility—on the contrary, a soft and caressing smile played around its wide mouth, and a mild, child-like expression softened down the want of intellect, which was evident from its wandering eye and hurried gestures. Yet Consuelo, when she found herself alone with an idiot, in a place where assuredly no person could come to her aid, was really afraid, in spite of the numerous reverences and affectionate smiles which the poor fool offered to her. She judged it for the best to return his smiles, and bows, so to avoid irritating him, but she arose in haste, and hurried away, pale and trembling.

The idiot did not offer to follow or recall her, but jumped on the *Stone of Terror*, following her with his eyes, jumping about, and throwing his hands and arms wildly to and fro, articulating many times in succession certain Bohemian words of which Consuelo could not comprehend the import.

When she saw that he did not attempt to molest her, she recovered courage to look at and listen to him, reproaching herself with the dread she felt of his natural deformity and mental affliction. Then she began to weave a hundred wild fancies concerning the cause and nature of his insanity, and concerning the contempt and hatred of men which she supposed him to be undergoing while under the especial protection of Providence.

The idiot, seeing that she slackened her pace, and seeming to comprehend the gentleness of her looks, began to talk to her in Bohemian with extreme volubility, and in a voice the softness of which was strangely contrasted by the hideousness of his appearance. Not comprehending him at all, Consuelo thought to offer him alms, and drew a coin from her pocket, which she laid on a large stone, first lifting it on high that he might see it. But the idiot only laughed the louder, rubbing his hands, and crying in bad German. "Useless! useless! Zdenko needs it not. Zdenko needs nothing. Zdenko is happy, very happy. Zdenko has consolation! consolation! consolation!" Then, as if he suddenly remembered a word which he had long been seeking, he cried out with delight, and quite intelligibly, though very ill pro-

nounced, the words, "*Consuelo! Consuelo! Consuelo! Consuelo, da mi alma!*"

Consuelo stopped short in astonishment, and addressing him in Spanish, asked, "Wherefore do you address me thus? Who taught you that name? How came you to understand the language which I speak?"

But to all these enquiries Consuelo awaited a reply in vain, for the idiot did nothing but jump about, repeating the word in a hundred different tones, apparently charmed with himself, and reiterating it like a bird which has picked up some articulate word, and delights to intermingle it with its natural strains.

As she returned toward the castle, Consuelo mused deeply on this odd occurrence, and at first tried to remember the face of the idiot who thus recognized and named her at first sight, as one of the Venetian vagabonds and beggars, whom she had been wont to meet on the quays and on the place of St. Mark; but though many recurred easily to her recollection, the idiot of the Stone of Terror had no place among them.

But as she crossed over the Pont Levis, a more logical and far more interesting explanation of what had passed, occurred to her. She resolved to enlighten herself carefully as to her suspicions, and went so far even as to congratulate herself that her expedition had not been altogether unsuccessful.

CHAPTER XXXVI

WHEN she again found herself in the midst of that melancholy and dejected family, while she now felt both hope and animation, she began to reproach herself for the severity with which she had judged these worthy and afflicted persons. Count Christian and the canoness ate not a morsel during breakfast; Amelia was in desperately ill-humor, and the chaplain dared not indulge his unflagging appetite. So soon as they rose from the table, the count stopped sadly for a moment at the window, gazed out upon the sandy road, across the warren, by which he hoped that Albert might return homeward, and then shook his head sadly, as who should say, "Here is another day ill begun, which will terminate as ill."

Consuelo tried to divert their thoughts by playing some of Porpora's latest religious compositions, to which they ever listened with unfailing interest and admiration. It grieved her to feel their grief, and yet not dare inform them of the better hopes she cherished. But when she saw the count resume his book, and the canoness her needle—when she found herself called upon to decide whether a certain ornament in the centre of the embroidery ought to have white or blue points, she could not refrain from returning in her thoughts to Albert, whom she fancied dying in his hideous catalepsy upon some lonely rock in the forest, or perhaps a prey to wolves and serpents, while under the industrious fingers of Wenceslawa a thousand brilliant flowers were glowing on the tapestry, watered perchance at intervals by a furtive but sterile tear.

As soon as she had an opportunity of questioning Amelia, who was

In the pouts, she inquired of her who was the strangely dressed foe who roamed the country, laughing idiotically at all whom he met.

"Oh! it is Zdenko," replied Amelia. "Have you not met him before in your rambles? One is certain to meet him sooner or later, for he has no settled abode."

"I saw him this morning for the first time, and fancied him the spirit of the Schreckenstein."

"Ah! is it there you have been wandering since day-break. I almost begin to think you mad yourself, my dear Nina, to go alone at dawn into those desert spots, where you might well meet worse customers than an inoffensive idiot such as Zdenko."

"Some hungry wolf, perhaps," said Consuelo, smiling, "But I fancy that your father, the baron's, rifle is a safeguard against such for the whole country."

"I do not speak of wild beasts only," said Amelia. "The country is infested, more than you imagine, with the most dangerous animals on earth, brigands and vagabonds. Whole tribes of families, ruined in the wars, roam about, demanding alms at the pistol's muzzle. Besides which, there are swarms of Egyptian Zingari, whom the French have honored us by calling Bohemians, as if they were aboriginal natives of our mountains. These people, rejected on all sides, and cowardly enough before armed men, might be bold enough to a handsome young girl, like you; and your adventurous walks might expose you to risks which should not be lightly encountered by a person so reasonable as you affect to be."

"Dear baroness," replied Consuelo, "although you seem to think so lightly of the fangs of a wolf, in comparison of the dangers which, as you say, threaten me, I confess that I should fear them far more than the Zingari. They are old acquaintances of mine, and I cannot fancy how one should fear beings so weak, so poor, and so persecuted. On the contrary, I have always felt that I could so speak to those people as to win their confidence, for if they be ill clad, and despised on all sides, it is impossible for me to avoid feeling a strong interest in them."

"Bravo! my dear," cried Amelia, with increased bitterness; "you have got so far, even, as Albert's fine sentiments in behalf of beggars, bandits, and aliens; nor shall I be surprised to see you, like him, leaning some fine morning on the frail and filthy arm of Zdenko."

These words struck Consuelo like a gleam of light, and she asked with a satisfaction which she sought not to conceal, "And does Count Albert live on good terms with Zdenko?"

"He is his most familiar and intimate friend," replied Amelia, scornfully. "He is the companion of his walks, the sharer of all his secrets, the messenger, as folks say, of his private correspondences with the devil. Zdenko and Albert hold conferences, for hours, on the Stone of Terror, concerning all sorts of absurdities, which they choose to call religion. Albert and Zdenko alone blush not to sit down on the grass with the Zingari, who halt under the shadow of our pine trees, and to share their disgusting meals from their wooden trenchers. They call this communicating—and it may well be called communicating, in every sense. A desirable husband, truly, my cousin Albert would be, who should grasp in his hand, lately sullied by the pestilential touch of the Zingari, the fingers of his betrothed, and raise them to lips which have drank the wine of the chalice from the same cup with Zdenko."

"This may be all vastly witty," said Consuelo; "but for my part, I do not understand one word of it."

"That is because you have no taste for history, and have not listened to me, when I have been talking myself hoarse in telling you about the riddles and mysterious acts of my cousin. Have I not told you how the great quarrel between the Hussites and the Romanists arose in relation to the two elements—the council of Bale insisting that it was a profanation to give the blood of our Saviour to the laity, in the element of wine, alleging—a fine argument, indeed—that as both his body and blood are contained in both elements—who eats the one drinks the other! Do you understand?"

"No. Neither did the council, I think. Logically, they might have said it was useless; but how profanation, if to eat implies drinking also?"

Thereupon, Amelia entered into a long discussion on the tenets of the two hostile churches, speaking equally in ridicule of each; condemning the luxury of the Catholics, and the fanaticism of the Hussites, who affected to use wooden cups and platters at communion, imitating the poverty of the Apostles.

"This," she pursued, "is the reason why Albert, who has taken it into his head to be a Hussite, after all the symbols of old have lost all signification; Albert, who affects to know the true doctrine of John Huss better than John Huss did himself, invents all sorts of communions, and goes about communicating, as he calls it, on the high road, with beggars, idiots, and even heathens. For it was a mania with the Hussites to communicate in all places, at all times, and with everybody."

"All this is fantastical enough," said Consuelo, and I can only ascribe it to an exalted patriotism, carried, I must admit, to delirium in Count Albert. There may be a deep meaning in the thought, but the formulæ are childish for a man so serious and learned. The true communion should rather be charity. For what can avail the empty ceremonies of the past, which can, by no possibility comprise the persons with whom he associates?"

"As for charity, Albert in no wise lacks that. If he were left to himself, he would strip himself of everything; and, for my part, I wish they would let him scatter all he possesses into the hands of vagabonds."

"And wherefore?"

"Because, then my father would give up the idea of enriching me by marrying me to this demoniac: for you must know that they have not given up this precious idea, and during the last few days, during which my cousin showed a glimpse of reason, attacked me on that head more strenuously than ever. We had a sharp quarrel, the result of which seems to be that my father is about to endeavor to reduce me, as they do castles, by blockade. If I yield, therefore, you see I shall be married to him, in spite of myself, of him, and of yet a third person, who affects not to care a particle about it."

"Here we are again, eh?" said Consuelo, laughing, "I expected some such sarcasm as that, and I see clearly that you have only done me the honor of conversing with me this morning, in order to arrive at it. I am glad to see it, however, for in this little comedy of jealousy, I discover a remnant of affection for Count Albert, which you will not confess."

"Nina!" exclaimed the young baroness, energetically, "if you think you see that, you lack penetration. If you rejoice at it, you lack regard for me. I am violent and proud, but I know not how to dis-

semble. I have told you that Albert's preference for you **enrages me** against him, not against you. It wounds my self-pride, and yet **flatters** my hopes and gratifies my wishes. I now only desire him to **commit** some notorious folly for you, which may rid me of all half **measures**, by justifying the aversion against which I have so long **striven**, but which I now feel towards him, unmixed with love or pity."

"God grant," cried Consuelo, "that this be the language, not of truth, but of passion; for it would be a very harsh truth in the hands of a very unfeeling person."

The bitterness which Amelia had shown during this conversation did not greatly affect Consuelo's generous spirit. She now thought only of her enterprise, and the dream which she cherished of restoring Albert to his family, cast a sort of pleasure over the monotony of her occupations. It was necessary, however, that she should occupy herself, in order to guard against the ennui which was growing upon her, and which, as it had been the disease most unknown to her active and laborious life, was that most painful to her. She had no resource, then, but, after giving Amelia a long and fastidious lesson, but to practice her own voice, and to study the ancient masters; but even this occupation, which as yet had never failed her, was now denied; for Amelia, with her idle curiosity, persisted in coming, interrupting and annoying her every five minutes, with childish questions and unmeaning observations. The rest of the family were horribly out of spirits, for already five mortal days had passed, since the disappearance of the young count, and every fresh day added to the consternation and dejection of the last.

That same afternoon, while Consuelo was strolling in the garden, with Amelia, she saw Zdenko on the farther side of the moat, which divided them from the open country. He was busy talking to himself, in a tone which seemed to indicate that he was relating a story. Consuelo stopped her companion, and begged her to translate the words of this strange being.

"How can I translate rhapsodies, without connection or meaning?" returned Amelia, shrugging up her shoulders. "He is muttering thus, if you care to hear it:

"There was once a great mountain, all white, all white; and hard by it a great mountain, all black, all black; and hard by it a great mountain, all red, all red.' Does this interest you much?"

"Perhaps it would, if I but knew the end. Oh! how I do wish I understood Bohemian. I will learn it."

"It is not quite so easy to learn as Italian or Spanish; still, you are so industrious, that you will soon master it, if you set to work. I will teach you, if it will give you any pleasure.

"You will be an angel to do so, provided always that you are more patient as a mistress than as a pupil. And now what is Zdenko saying?"

"Now the mountains are conversing, 'Wherefore, O red mountain, all red, hast thou crushed the mountain all black? And thou white mountain, all white, wherefore hast thou suffered the black mountain, all black, to be crushed?'

Here Zdenko began to sing with a shrill and broken voice, but so sweetly and truly, that Consuelo felt her heart thrill to the core. His song proceeded:

"Black mountains and white mountains, then, will need much water, much water, to bleach your garments—"

"Your garments black with crime, and white with illeness—your garments soiled with falsehood, your garments glittering with pride. "Now they are both bleached, well bleached. Your garments which would not change their hues—behold! they are worn, much worn, your garments which would not sweep the dust.

"Lo! all the mountains are red, all red. These will need all the waters of heaven, all the waters of heaven to bleach them clean."

"Is this improvised, or is it an old national song?" added Consuelo.

"Who can tell? Zdenko is either an inexhaustible improvisateur or a most learned rhapsodist. Our peasants delight to hear him, respect him as a saint, and regard his insanity as a gift rather than as a misfortune from the hand of heaven. They feed and cherish him, and if he would, he might be the best clad and best lodged man in the country, for every one strives for the pleasure and advantage of being his host. He is regarded as a luck-bearer, as a good omen. When a storm threatens, Zdenko says, 'It is nothing; the hail will not fall here!' If the harvest is bad, they entreat Zdenko to sing, and as he always promises years of fertility and increase, they console themselves for the present, expecting a better future. But Zdenko will abide nowhere. His vagabond nature leads him away into the depths of forests. No one knows where he sleeps of nights, or where he shelters himself from storm or tempest. Never, in ten years, has he been seen to pass beneath any roof but that of the Giant's Castle, for he pretends that his ancestors are in all the other houses of the country, and that he is forbidden to appear before them. Nevertheless, he follows Albert to his chamber, for to him he is as faithful and obedient as his dog Cynabre. Albert is the only being who controls at his pleasure the wild independence of his nature, and who can bid cease at a word his unflagging gaiety, his eternal songs, and unwearied babble. Zdenko, they say, had once a very fine voice, but he has exhausted it by singing, chattering, and laughing. He is scarcely older than Albert, though he looks like a man of fifty. They have been comrades from childhood. At that time Zdenko was but half an idiot. Descended from an ancient family—one of his ancestors having figured in the Hussite wars—he had enough memory and quickness to be destined by his parents to the cloister. For a long time, he wore the garb of a mendicant novice, but when he was sent out with the ass and wallet, accompanied by a brother, to seek gifts from the charitable, he absconded into the woods, leaving ass, friar, and wallet, and was not seen for many a day. When Albert went abroad, he fell into deep melancholy, cast his frock to the winds, and became entirely a vagabond. By degrees his melancholy passed away, but although his gaiety returned, the gleams of reason which had previously shone out through the oddities of his character, became entirely extinct. He talks no longer, except incoherently, displays all sorts of strange manias, and is really quite mad; but as he is always sober, peaceful, and inoffensive, and may be rather looked on as an idiot than as a madman, our peasantry call him the innocent, and no more."

"All that you tell me of the poor creature," said Consuelo, "only the more awakens my sympathies in his behalf. I wish I could talk to him. Does he speak German at all?"

"He understands, and can speak it better, or worse, but like all Bohemian peasants, he detests the language; and being always busied in reveries, as he is now, it is more than doubtful if he will listen to you when you address him."

"Try to speak to him 'n his own language, and attract his attention to us," said Consuelo.

Amelia called several times to Zdenko, asking him in Bohemian if he was well, and if he wished for anything, but she could not make him lift his head, or intermit a game which he was playing with three pebbles, one black, one white, and one red, throwing them one at the other, and laughing when any fell.

"You see it is in vain," said Amelia. "When he is not hungry he never speaks to us, unless he is in search of Albert. In either of these cases he comes to the castle gate, and if he is only hungry he stands still on the threshold. Whatever he wants is given to him; he returns thanks, and goes his way. If he wishes to see Albert he enters, and goes and knocks at his chamber door, which is never closed against him, and there he remains, silent and docile as a timid child, if Albert is studying; full of clatter and mirth, if Albert is inclined to listen to him; never troublesome, as it appears, to my charming cousin, and happier in that respect than any member of the family."

"And when Count Albert becomes invisible, as at present, does Zdenko, who loves him so dearly, and who so deplored his absence when abroad, manifest no uneasiness?"

"None. He says that Albert has gone to see the Almighty, and that he will bring him back when he pleases. That was what he said while Albert was travelling."

"And do you not suspect, dear Amelia, that Zdenko may have better reasons than any of you for his security? Has it never struck you that he may be in Albert's secret, and may watch over him while in his lethargic or delirious state?"

"We once thought so, and long watched his movements, but, like his patron Albert, he cannot endure supervision, and more cunning than a fox, he eludes all vigilance, outwits all stratagems, and has, it is said, like Albert, the power of rendering himself invisible when he pleases. He has sometimes disappeared as suddenly from eyes riveted upon him, as if he had dived into the earth, or been swallowed in a cloud. At least, so says my aunt Wenceslawa, who, for all her piety, has not the strongest head in the world as regards diabolical influences."

"But you, my dear baroness, cannot credit these absurdities?"

"No. But I agree with my uncle Christian, in thinking that if Albert, in his mysterious disappearances, has no aid but that of this vagabond, it would be very dangerous to deprive him of it, of which there is much risk, by watching Zdenko, and annoying him in his manœuvres. But for heaven's sake, dear Nina, let us turn to some other subject. We have had enough on this chapter, for I do not feel the same interest with you in this idiot. I am wearied of his endless romances and songs, and his broken voice gives me a sore throat."

"I wonder," said Consuelo, following her companion, "that his voice has no charm for your ears, for all broken as it is, on me it has a more powerful effect than that of the finest singers."

"That is because you are *blasée* with fine singing, and love novelty."

"The language which he sings is peculiarly melodious," replied Consuelo, "and the monotony of his tones is not what you think it. The ideas are, on the contrary very sweet and original."

"For my part, I am weary to death of them," answered Amelia. At first I took some interest in them, thinking, with the people of

the country, that they might be old national songs, curious in an historical connection, but as he never repeats them twice alike, I am satisfied that he improvises them, and at a hearing or two I was satisfied that they were not worth listening to, although our mountaineers find in them at their will a symbolical meaning."

As soon as Consuelo could rid herself of Amelia, she ran back to the garden, where she found Zdenko still playing as before, on the outer side of the moat. Being now assured that this wretched being had relations of some kind with Albert, she had secretly provided herself with a cake of the canoness' making, which she had observed that Albert preferred, and wrapping it in a white handkerchief, which she wished to throw across the moat to Zdenko, she took the chance of calling him by name. But he took no notice of her. Then, remembering the eagerness with which he had repeated her own name, she repeated it in German, but he was in a melancholy mood, and without looking at her he only repeated, in German, "Consolation! Consolation!" as who should say, "for me there is no consolation."

Then, desirous of seeing if her name in Spanish would produce the same effect it had in the morning, she said, "Consuelo."

On the instant Zdenko left his pebbles, and began jumping and gesticulating on the edge of the moat, waving his bonnet over his head, stretching his arms toward her, with very animated Bohemian words, and a face beaming with pleasure.

"Albert!" cried Consuelo, and threw the cake to him.

Zdenko picked it up, laughing, and without unfolding the handkerchief; but he said many things which Consuelo was in despair at not being able to understand. She listened attentively, and succeeded in catching one phrase which he repeated many times, always bowing as he uttered it. Her musical ear enabled her to seize the exact pronunciation, and as soon as Zdenko was gone, for he took to his heels at full speed, she wrote it in her pocket-book, spelling it in Venetian, with the intent to learn its meaning from Amelia. But before she left Zdenko, being desirous of giving him something which should denote more delicately the interest she took in Albert, she recalled the innocent, and as he returned, obedient to her voice, she threw him a bouquet, which she had gathered an hour before in the hothouse, and which still remained fresh and perfumed at her belt. Zdenko picked it up, repeated his salutation, his exclamations, and his bounds, and then, plunging into the brushwood, through which one could have supposed that a hare only could make its way, disappeared altogether. For a few moments Consuelo watched his rapid flight with all her eyes, judging that he was going to the south-eastward by the agitation of the top of the bushes. But a slight breeze soon set her observation at naught, by shaking equally the tops of all the copice, and Consuelo returned to the castle, more set than ever to persevere in her determination.

CHAPTER XXXVII

WHEN Amelia was asked to interpret what Consuelo had written on her tablets and engraved in her memory, she said she knew nothing about the matter, though she was able to translate literally these words:

"Let the person you have injured salute you."

"Perhaps," said she, "he wishes to speak of Albert or of himself, saying that an injury has been done them, by taxing them with madness. You must know they think themselves the only two reasonable men alive. Why, though, look for sense in the conversation of a madman? This Zdenko occupies more of your thoughts than you think."

"The people everywhere," said Consuelo, "attribute to madmen a kind of intelligence altogether superior to that perceived by colder minds. I have a right to preserve the prejudices of my class, and I cannot think a madman speaks *ad libitum*, when he utters things which seem to us unintelligible."

"Let us see," said Amelia, "if the chaplain, who is well versed in all the formidable formulas of the old world lore our parents are familiar with, is acquainted with this." Going to the good man, she asked him to translate the phrase of Zdenko.

These obscure words, however, seemed to cast a terrible light into the chaplain's heart. "Living God!" said he, "was such a blasphemy ever heard!"

"If there ever was," said Amelia, "I cannot conceive what it is. For that reason I asked you to translate it."

"Word for word in good German it means 'let the person you have injured save you.' If though, you wish to know the meaning loud, (I dare scarcely to pronounce it,)—the meaning is—'Let the devil be with you!'"

"In plain language," said Amelia, "it means, 'Go to the devil.' Well, that is a pretty compliment, and this is all we make, dear Nina, by talking to fools. You did not think that Zdenko, with his affable smile and pleasant grimaces, played so ungallant a part with you?"

"Zdenko?" said the chaplain. "Ah! none but an idiot speaks thus. Very well: I was afraid it was some one else—I was wrong. Such a series of abominations could only come from a head filled up with old heresy. Whence did he obtain a knowledge of things either unknown now or forgotten? The Spirit of Evil alone can suggest it to him."

"Bah! that is nothing but a simple asseveration used by the populace in every country. The Catholics are no worse than others."

"Think not so, baroness," said the chaplain. "This is not a malediction in the understanding of him who uses it. On the contrary, it is a benediction—in that consists the crime. This is an abomination of the Lollards, a detestable sect which begot the Vandois, from whom come the Hussites."

"And they will beget many others," said Amelia, gravely, as if she wished to laugh at the good priest. "Let us see, though, father. How can one gain another's thanks by recommending his neighbor to the Devil?"

"The reason is, that, as the Lollards think, Satan was not the ene-

my of humanity, but on the contrary, its protector and patron. They said he was the victim of injustice and jealousy. As they think, the archangel Michael and the other celestial powers who precipitated him into darkness were true devils, while Lucifer, Beelzebub, Astaroth, Astarte, and the monsters of hell, were innocence itself. They thought the reign of Michael and his glorious army soon would end, and that the devil and his phalanxes would be restored. They also paid him an impious worship, and when they met, said, 'May the one who has been wronged salute you,' that is to say 'salute and assist you.'

"Well," said Amelia, laughing loud, "Nina is under the most favorable auspices. I shall not be amazed if we should have to use exorcisms to destroy the effects of Zdenko's incantations."

"Consuelo was amused by this sport. She was not very sure that the devil was a chimera and hell a poetic fable. She would have been inclined to think that the indignation and terror of the chaplain was serious, had not the latter, offended by Amelia's scoffs, been perfectly ridiculous. Amazed, troubled in all her childish opinions by the scene of strife into which she had been cast, between credulity and superstition, Consuelo had not a little trouble in saying her prayers. She passed in review all forms of worship which she had hitherto received blindly, but which no longer satisfied her. As far as I can see, there are two kinds of devotion at Venice. That of the convents and of the populace, and that of the people, which perhaps goes too far; for under the guise of religion it receives all kinds of superstitious accessories, the ORCO, (the devil of the Lagunes,) the sorceries of Malamocco, the search after gold, the horoscope and vows to the saints for the success of the most impious wishes. There is also that of the fashionable world and of the higher clergy, which is but a mere type. They go to church as they do to the theatre, to hear music and to show themselves, laughing at everything, even at religion, thinking nothing is serious or exerts an influence over their conscience—that form and custom are everything. Consuelo continued to think of these things, to express her regret that Anzoleto was not religiously inclined; that Porpora had faith in nothing. She was herself in the greatest trouble, and said, "For what shall I toil? Why shall I be pitiful, brave or generous, who am alone in the world, unless there be a Supreme Being, intelligent and full of love? who judges not, but approves and aids me? who also blesses me. What power, what intoxication do they infuse into life, who can pass from hope and love above all the vicissitudes and all the illusions of life?"

"Supreme Being!" cried she in her heart, forgetting the accustomed form of her prayer, "teach me what I ought to do. Infinite Love! teach me what I ought to love. Infinite Wisdom! teach me what I ought to believe."

While thus praying and meditating, she forgot the flight of time, and it was past midnight when before retiring to bed she cast a glance over the landscape now lighted by the moon's pale beams. The view from her window was not very extensive, owing to the surrounding mountains, but exceedingly picturesque. A narrow and winding valley, in the centre of which sparkled a mountain stream, lay before her, its meadows gently undulating until they reached the base of the surrounding hills, which shut in the horizon, except where at intervals they opened to permit the eye to discover still more distant and steeper ranges, clothed to the very summit with dark green fir. The

last rays of the setting moon shone full on the principal features of this sombre but striking landscape, to which the dark foliage of the evergreens, the pent-up water, and the rocks covered with moss and ivy, imparted a stern and savage aspect.

While Consuelo was comparing this country with those she had travelled through in her childhood, she was struck with an idea she had not known before. It seemed that what passed before her was not entirely new, either because she had been in Bohemia or in some very similar place. "My mother and myself," said she, "travelled so much, that it would not be at all surprising had I ever been here; and often I have a distinct idea of Dresden and Vienna. We may have passed through Bohemia to go to one or the other of those capitals. It would be strange, however, if we had received hospitality in some barn where I am now welcomed as a lady; or if we earned by our songs a piece of bread at the door of some hut where Zdenko now sings his old songs. Zdenko, the wandering artist, is my equal, though he does not seem to be."

Just then her eyes fell on the Schreckenstein, the brow of which she saw above a nearer peak, and it seemed to her to be crowned with a ruddy color, which feebly changed the transparent blue of heaven. She looked closely at it, and saw it become more indistinct, disappear, and come again, until it was so distinct that it could not be an illusion of the senses. Whether this was but the passing abode of a band of Zingari, the haunt of some brigands, or not, it was very evident that the Schreckenstein was now occupied by living beings; and Consuelo, after her fervent prayer to Almighty God, was no longer disposed to believe in the stranger beings with which popular tradition peopled the mountain. Did not Zdenko kindle the fire to ward off the chill of the night? If Zdenko was there, was not that fire kindled for Albert's sake? This light had often been seen on the mountain, and all spoke of it with terror, attributing it to some supernaturalism. It had a thousand times been said that it came from the enchanted trunk of Ziska's tree. The Hussite, however, no longer existed; at all events he was at the bottom of the ravine, and the red light now burned on the top of the mountain. Whither could this mysterious light call her, if not to Albert's retreat?

"Oh, apathy of immortal souls," said Consuelo, "you are a blessing of God or an infirmity of incomplete natures." She asked herself if she would have courage to go alone, and her heart replied that for a charitable purpose she certainly would. She was, however, flattering herself perfectly gratuitously in this respect, for the severe discipline of the castle left her no chance of egress.

At dawn she awoke, full of zeal, and hurried to the mountain. All was silent and deserted, and the grass around the Rock of Terror seemed undisturbed. There were no traces of fire, and no evidence that any one had been there on the night before. She examined the whole mountain, but found nothing. She called for Zdenko, whistled to arouse the barking of Cynabre, called him again and again. She called "Consolation" in every tongue she knew, and sung several verses of her Spanish song, and even some of the Bohemian airs of Zdenko, which she remembered perfectly. She heard no reply. The moss rustled beneath her feet, and the murmur of mysterious waters beneath the rocks alone broke on her ear.

Exhausted by this useless search, she was after a few moments' rest about to retire, when she saw at her feet a pale and withered rose-leaf.

She picked it up, unfolded it, and became satisfied that it could not but be a leaf of a bouquet she had thrown to Zdenko. The mountain produced none but wild roses, and besides, this was not the season of their bloom. This faint index consoled her for all her fatigue and the apparent uselessness of her walk, persuading her fully that she must expect to meet Albert at the Schreckenstein.

In what impenetrable cavern of the mountain though was he concealed? He either was not there all the time, or now had some violent cataleptic attack. Perhaps Consuelo was mistaken in thinking her voice had any power over him, and his delight at seeing her was but an access of madness, which had left no trace in his memory. He now, perhaps, heard and saw her, laughed at her efforts and her useless advances.

At this idea Consuelo felt her cheeks flush, and she left the mountain at once with a determination never to return thither. She left behind her, though, the basket of fruits she had brought with her.

On the next day, she found the basket in the same place, perfectly untouched, and even the leaves which covered it were undisturbed. Her offering had been even disdained, or Albert and Zdenko had not passed it. Yet the red light of the pine-wood fire had burnt all night on the mountain brow.

Consuelo watched until dawn to ascertain this. She had more than once seen the light grow bright and dim, as if a careful hand attended it. No one had seen Zingra in the vicinity. No stranger had been observed on the skirts of the forest, and all the peasants Consuelo examined in relation to the Stone of Terror told her in bad German, that it was not right to inquire into such things, for that people should not look into the affairs of the other world.

Albert, then, had not been seen for nine days. He had not been absent so long before, and this fact, added to the unlucky presages in relation to his thirtieth year, were not calculated to revive the hopes of his family. They began to be uneasy, and Count Christian began to sigh in a most unhappy manner. The baron went out shooting but killed nothing, and the chaplain made the most extraordinary prayers. Amelia neither laughed nor sung; and her aunt, pale and feeble, neglected her domestic cares, telling her chaplet from morning till night. She seemed bent a foot more than usual.

Consuelo ventured to propose a scrupulous and careful exploration of the mountain, confessed the examination she had made herself, and confided to the canoness the circumstance of the rose-leaf, and the careful manner in which she had examined the surface of the mountain. The arrangements Wenceslawa made for the exploration soon induced Consuelo to repent of her confidence. The canoness insisted on securing Zdenko's person, or terrifying him, and on sending out fifty men with torches and guns. She also wished the chaplain to pronounce an exorcism over the fatal stone, while the baron, accompanied by Hans and his most faithful companions, besieged the mountain.

This was the very way to make Albert staring mad, and by means of prayer and persuasion, Consuelo induced Wenceslawa to undertake nothing without her consent. This was her final proposition, and the one determined on: they were to leave the chateau on the next night and go alone, being followed in the distance by Hans and the chaplain, to examine the fire of Schreckenstein. This, however, was too much for the canoness. She was satisfied the witches held their Sabbath on the Stone of Terror, and all Consuelo could obtain

was, that the gates might be opened to her at midnight, and that the baron and a few other persons should accompany her without arms and in silence. It was arranged that Count Christian was to know nothing of this, because his advanced age and feeble health would not permit him to do so during the cold and unhealthy season. All knew, however, he would insist on accompanying them.

All this was done, as Consuelo had desired. The baron, the chaplain, and Hans accompanied them. She went alone a hundred paces in advance of their escort, ascending the mountain with a courage worthy of Bradamante. As she drew near, however, the light which seemed to radiate from the fissures of the rock became gradually dim, and when she had come there a deep obscurity enveloped the mountain from the base to the summit. All was silent and solitary. She called for Zdenko, Cynabre, and Albert, though when she uttered his name she was terrified. All was silent, and echo replied alone.

Perfectly discouraged, she soon returned to her guides. They extolled her courage greatly, and ventured to examine the places she had left. They found nothing, and all returned in silence to the chateau, when the canoness, as she heard their story, felt her last hope decay.

CHA TER XXXVIII.

CONSUELO, after having received the thanks and the kiss of the kind Wenceslawa, went carefully to her room, taking precaution not to waken Amelia, from whom the enterprise had been concealed. She was on the first story, the rooms of the canoness being on the ground floor. As she went up the stairway, though, she let fall her light, which went out before she had time to pick it up. She thought she could find her way without its aid, especially as day was about to break. Whether, because her mind was strongly engrossed, or that her courage after such an unusual exertion had been exhausted, it at once left her, and she trembled so that she went on until she came to the upper story, and reached the corridor of Albert's room, just above her own. Completely terror-stricken, she saw a dark shadow retire before her, and glide away as if its feet did not touch the floor, into the room Consuelo was about to enter, thinking it was her own. Amid all her terror, she had enough presence of mind to examine the figure, and see that it was Zdenko. What business had he to enter her room at that hour, and what had he to say to her? She did not feel disposed to meet him face to face, and went down stairs to see Wenceslawa. Not until after she had passed down stairs, and through a who corridor, did she become aware she had seen Zdenko enter Albert's room.

Then a thousand conjectures suggested themselves to her mind, which was become perfectly calm and attentive. How had the idiot been able to penetrate by night into a chateau so closely watched and examined every night? The apparition of Zdenko confirmed an idea she had always entertained, that the castle had a secret outlet. She hurried to the door of the canoness, who had already shut herself up in her austere cell, and who shrieked aloud when she saw her so pale and without a light.

"Do not be uneasy, dear madam," said the young girl to her. "This is a new event, whimsical enough, perhaps, which need not make you afraid. I have just seen Zdenko in Albert's room."

"Zdenko! You are dreaming, my dear child. How could he have got in? I shut all the gates carefully, as usual; and all the time you were on the mountain I kept a close watch. The drawbridge was up, and when you passed over it on your return I remained behind to see it lifted up again."

"Be that as it may, madam, Zdenko is in Albert's room. You can satisfy yourself."

"I will, and will have him put out. He must have come in during the day. That proves, my child, that he knows no more where Albert is than we do."

"At all events, let us see," said Consuelo.

"One moment," said the canoness, who, being about to go to bed, had taken off some of her under-garments, and fancied herself too lightly clad. "I cannot thus present myself before a man. Go for the chaplain or the baron, the first you see. We cannot expose ourselves to meet this madman. Now, though, I think, it will not do for a woman like you to knock at their doors. Well, I will soon be ready. Wait for me."

She dressed herself as quickly as possible, acting, though, as if the interruption of her usual habits had completely crazed her. Consuelo, impatient lest during the delay Zdenko might leave Albert's room and conceal himself somewhere in the castle, regained all her energy. "Dear madam," said she, lighting her lamp, "will you call the gentlemen, while I take care Zdenko does not escape."

Going hastily up two flights of stairs, she opened Albert's door without any difficulty. The room, however, was deserted. She went into the cabinet, examined every curtain, and even looked under the bed and behind the curtains. Zdenko was not there, and had left no trace.

"Nobody is there," said she to the canoness, who came up-stairs with Hans and the chaplain. The baron was in bed and asleep, and they had not been able to wake him.

"I begin to be afraid," said the chaplain, rather out of humor at the new alarm, "that Porporina is the dupe of her own illusions."

"No, sir," said she; "no one of this company is less so than I am."

"And no one," said the good man, "has more true good will. In your ardent wish to discover some traces of Albert, you have suffered yourself to be deceived."

"Father," said the canoness, "la Porporina is brave as a lion, and prudent as a doctor. If she saw Zdenko, he was here. We must have the house searched, and, as it is closed, he cannot escape us, thank God."

The other servants were awakened, and every place was searched. Every dormitory was opened, every article of furniture was deranged. The forage even of the stables was examined. Hans looked even into the big boots of the baron. Zdenko was neither in them nor in any visible place. All began to think Consuelo had been dreaming. She, though, was more satisfied than ever that there was a mysterious outlet to the castle, and this she resolved to discover. After a few hours' rest, she resolved to look again. The building in which her rooms were (Albert's were there too), was, as it were, hung on the hill side. This picturesque position had been selected by Albert, be-

cause it enabled him to enjoy a fine southern view, and on the east overlook a pretty garden on a level with his workshop. He was fond of flowers, and cultivated some rare plants in beds on the terrace, the earth to form which had been brought thither from below. The terrace was surrounded by a heavy stone wall, breast high, overlooking rough rocks and a flowery belvidera on one side, and on the other a large portion of the Boehmer-wald. Consuelo had never yet been in this place, and admired its fine position and picturesque arrangement. She then made the chaplain tell her what had been the use of this terrace since the time the castle had been transformed from a fortress into a residence.

He said it was an old bastion, a kind of fortified terrace, whence the garrison were able to watch the motions of troops in the valley or mountains around. Every pass was visible hence. Once a high wall with loopholes surrounded the platform, and protected the garrison from the arrows of the enemy.

"What is this?" said Consuelo, approaching a cistern in the midst of the parterre, and in which was a narrow winding stairway.

"This once supplied the garrison abundantly with spring water. It was of vast importance to the fortress."

"This water is then fit to drink," said Consuelo, as she looked at the green and slimy water of the cistern. "To me it looks as if it had been disturbed."

"It is not good now, or, at least, it is not always good, and Count Albert uses it only to water his flowers. I must tell you that about two months ago a strange phenomenon took place in this fountain. The spring (for there is one in the mountain) became intermittent. For several weeks the water sinks rapidly, and Count Albert makes Zdenko bring up buckets-full to water his plants. All at once, sometimes during one night or one hour, the cistern becomes filled with warm troubled water, as you see now. Some phenomenon of this kind must have taken place during the night, for on yesterday only the cistern was clear and full, and now it looks as if it had been empty and filled again."

"These phenomena do not recur regularly?"

"No. I would have examined them carefully, had not Count Albert, who keeps all from entering his room and his garden, with the sternness he exhibits in every respect, forbade me to do so."

"How, then, do you explain the disappearance of the water at other times?"

"By the great quantity required for the Count's flowers."

"Many hours, it seems to me, would be required to empty this cistern. Is it not deep?"

"Not deep? It has no bottom."

"Then your explanation is not satisfactory," said Consuelo, amazed at the chaplain's folly.

"Find a better one, then," said he, sharply.

"Certainly I will," said Consuelo, completely engrossed by the caprices of the fountain.

"Oh! if you ask Count Albert about it," said the chaplain, who would have willingly acquired an ascendancy over the clear-sighted stranger, "he would tell you they are the tears of his mother, collected in the centre of the mountain. The famous Zdenko, to whom you attribute so much penetration, would say that some syren sang there to those who had ears to hear. They have baptised this well 'the

fountain of tears.' All that may be very fanciful to persons who are satisfied with Pagan fables."

"They do not satisfy me, and I will find out this secret."

"For my part," said the chaplain, "I think there must be an escapement in some other part of the fountain."

"Certainly," said Consuelo, "otherwise it would always overflow."

"Certainly, certainly," said the chaplain, unwilling to confess that the idea occurred to him for the first time. "One need not go far to ascertain so simple a thing. There must, though, be some derangement in the canals since the spring does not maintain its old level."

"Are those natural veins, or artificial aqueducts?" said the self-willed Consuelo. "It is important to ascertain this."

"No one can do so," said the chaplain; "for Count Albert will permit no one to interfere with his fountain, and has positively ordered that it shall not be cleaned out."

"I was sure of it," said Consuelo, going away. "I think you are right to respect his wishes; for God only knows what may be the result if his syren be contradicted."

"It seems clear to me," said the chaplain, as she left, "that that young lady's mind is as much out of order as Count Albert's. Folly is contagious. Perhaps Porpora has sent her hither to be revived by country air. If I did not look at the obstinacy with which she insisted on explaining away the mystery of the fountain, I would be half inclined to think her the daughter of some canal-maker of Venice, and pretending to know all about such things. I can see, though, from her last words, and her hallucination about Zdenko this morning, and taking us up in the mountain, that it is a fancy of the same kind. She takes it into her head Count Albert is in the well. Poor children, will they ever become reasonable?"

The good chaplain then went to tell his beads until dinner time.

Consuelo said to herself, "Idleness and apathy must beget a strange weakness of mind, to make this holy man, who has read and learned so much, have no idea of my suspicions about this fountain. Forgive me, oh God! but that servant and minister of thine makes little use of his reason. They say Zdenko is imbecile!" Consuelo then went to give the young baroness a lesson in music, to while away the time, until she might be at liberty to begin her examination again.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

"HAVE you ever been present at the falling of the water, or seen it re-ascend?" said Consuelo, in a low voice, to the chaplain, as he sat comfortably digesting his dinner during the evening.

"What—what did you say?" cried he, bounding up in his chair, and rolling his great round eyes.

"I was speaking to you of the cistern," returned she, without being disconcerted: "have you ever yourself observed the occurrence of the phenomenon?"

"Ah, yes—the cistern—I remember," replied he, with a smile of pity. "There," thought he, "her crazy fit has attacked her again."

"But you have not answered my question, my dear chaplain," said

Consuelo, who pursued her object with that kind of eagerness which characterised all her thoughts and actions, and which was not prompted in the least by any malicious feeling towards the worthy man.

"I must confess, mademoiselle," replied he, coldly, "that I was never fortunate enough to observe that to which you refer; and I assure you I never lost my sleep on that account."

"Oh, I am very certain of that," replied the impatient Consuelo.

The chaplain shrugged his shoulders, and with a great effort rose from his chair, in order to escape from so very ardent an inquirer.

"Well, since no one here is willing to lose an hour's sleep for so important a discovery, I will devote my whole night to it if necessary," thought Consuelo; and while waiting for the hour of retiring, she wrapped herself in her mantle, and proceeded to take a turn in the garden.

The night was cold and bright, and the mists of evening dispersed in proportion as the moon, then full, ascended towards the empyrean. The stars twinkled more palely at her approach, and the atmosphere was dry and clear. Consuelo, excited, but not overpowered, by the mingled effects of fatigue, want of sleep, and the generous, but perhaps rather unhealthy sympathy she experienced for Albert, felt a slight sensation of fever, which the cool evening air could not dissipate. It seemed to her as if she touched upon the fulfilment of her enterprise, and a romantic presentiment, which she interpreted as a command and encouragement from Providence, kept her mind uneasy and agitated. She seated herself upon a little grassy hillock, studded with larches, and began to listen to the feeble and plaintive sound of the streamlet at the bottom of the valley. But it seemed to her as if another voice, still more sweet and plaintive, mingled with the murmurings of the water and by degrees floated upwards to her ears. She stretched herself upon the turf, in order, being nearer the earth, to hear better those light sounds which the breeze wafted towards her every moment. At last she distinguished Zdenko's voice. He sang in German, and by degrees she could distinguish the following words, tolerably well arranged to a Bohemian air, which was characterised by the same simple and plaintive expression as those she had already heard:—

"There is down there, down there, a soul in pain and in labor, which awaits her deliverance.

"Her deliverance, her consolation, so often promised.

"The deliverance seems enchained, the consolation seems pitiless.

"There is down there, down there, a soul in pain and in labor which is weary of waiting."

When the voice ceased singing Consuelo rose, looked in every direction for Zdenko, searching the whole park and garden to find him, called him in various places, but was obliged to return to the castle without having seen him.

But an hour afterwards, when the whole household had joined in a long prayer for Count Albert, and when everybody had retired to rest, Consuelo hastened to place herself near the Fountain of Tears, and seating herself upon the margin, amid the thick mosses and water plants which grew there naturally, and the irises which Albert had planted, she fixed her eyes upon the motionless water, in which the moon, then arrived at the zenith, was reflected as in a mirror.

After the lapse of about an hour, as the courageous girl, overcome by

fatigue, felt her eyelids close, she was awakened by a light murmur on the surface of the water. She looked around, and saw the reflection of the moon vibrating on the mirror of the fountain. At the same time a bubbling and an indistinct noise, at first imperceptible, but growing gradually impetuous, was heard. She saw the water gradually sink; and in a quarter of an hour disappear. She ventured to descend a few steps. The stairway, which seemed to have been made to enable the tide level of the water to be reached, was formed of vast blocks of granite cut in a spiral form. The slippery steps afforded her no resting-place, and descended to a great depth. Darkness, the dripping of the rest of the water down the immeasurable precipices, and the impossibility of a steady step, put an end to the mad attempt of Consuelo. She ascended, with her face looking downwards, with great difficulty, and pale and terrified, sat on the first step.

The waters seemed to sink in the bowels of the earth. The noise became more and more indistinct, and Consuelo had almost resolved to go for a light to examine the interior of the cistern. She was, however, afraid that the person she expected would not come, and therefore was motionless for half an hour. At last she fancied that she saw a faint light at the bottom of the well, which seemed gradually to grow near her. She was soon relieved of all doubt, for she saw Zdenko come up the stairway, holding on by an iron chain which was fastened to the rock. The noise he made, as he took hold of the chain and again let it go, informed Consuelo of the existence of a regular stairway, and relieved her from all anxiety. Zdenko had a lantern, which he hung on a hook, intended to be used for the purpose, and which was about twenty feet below the ground. He then came rapidly up the rest of the stairway without using the chain or any apparent aid. Consuelo looked at him with the greatest attention, and saw him assist himself by various points of the rock, and by several parasitic plants which seemed more vigorous than the other, and it may be, by various nails driven into the wall, with the position of which he was familiar. As soon as he was able to see Consuelo, she hid herself behind the balustrade, at the top of the stairway. Zdenko went out and began to gather with much care certain choice flowers. He then went into Albert's room through a glass door, and Consuelo saw him look among the books for one which he seemed at last to find. He then returned to the cistern with a smile on his face, and at the same time talking almost inaudibly, as if he was afraid to awaken the inmates of the house, and yet was anxious to talk to himself.

Consuelo had not, as yet, asked herself whether she should speak to him and ask him to take her to Albert. To tell the truth, she was at this time amazed at what she saw, and rejoiced at having had a presentiment of what she saw to be the truth. She had not courage enough, though, to venture to descend into the bowels of the earth, and suffered Zdenko to descend again, take his lantern and disappear—his voice resuming its power as he went into the depths of his retreat:—"Liberty is manacled and consolation is pitiless."

With a beating heart and a neck outstretched, Consuelo ten times at least was on the point of recalling him. She was resolved at one time to make a heroic effort, when she remembered that from surprise the poor man might quail and tremble, and that dizziness might cause his death. She did not therefore call, but resolved on the next day to be more courageous, and to call him at the proper time.

She waited to see the water rise, and on this occasion it did so more

rapidly. Scarcely a quarter of an hour had passed since Zdenko's voice became inaudible and the light of his lantern invisible, when a hoarse noise, not unlike the rolling of distant thunder, was heard. The water rushed up violently, whirling around the walls of the well and boiling impetuously. This sudden rush of water was so violent that Consuelo trembled for poor Zdenko, and asked herself if in thus sporting with danger and controlling the powers of nature, he was not in danger of being carried away, and some day of reappearing on the surface of the water crushed and bruised, like the slimy plants she saw floating on the surface.

"Yet everything must necessarily be very simple. He needed only to lift up or shut down a flood-gate—perhaps he had only to push down a stone as he entered, and remove it as he left. Might not this man, always preoccupied and immersed in reveries, be mistaken some day and move the stone a moment too soon? Did he come up by the same passage which led from the spring? I must go through, though, either with or without him, and that at no more remote an hour than the next night—'For a soul is in toil below waiting for, and anxious because I do not come.' That was not sung by chance, and not without difficulty did Zdenko, who hates German and pronounces it imperfectly, speak to-day in that tongue."

At last she went to bed, but passed the whole night a prey to terrible night-mares. Fever was beginning; she was not aware of it, so full was she of power and resolution. Every now and then, though, she awoke suddenly, imagining that she was yet on the stairs of that terrible well, without being able to ascend them, while the water rose around her rapidly as possible.

She was on the next day so changed that everybody remarked it. The chaplain could not help saying to the canoness, that this "agreeable and obliging person" seemed to be a little deranged. The good Wenceslawa, who was unused to see so much courage and devotion, began to fancy that the young daughter was very excitable and nervous. She had too much confidence in her iron-bound doors and the keys which always hung at her belt, to fancy it possible for Zdenko to enter and leave at night. She then spoke kindly to Consuelo, and besought her not to identify herself with their family misfortunes, and endanger her health. She also sought to give her hopes of the speedy return of her nephew, though she had begun to lose all hope of it herself. Indeed, she was under the influence of both hope and fear, when Consuelo replied to her with a glance brilliant with satisfaction—

"You are right to think and hope so, madam. Count Albert is alive and not sick, I hope. He yet is anxious about his books and flowers in his retreat—I am certain of it, and can satisfy you."

"What mean you, my child?" said Wenceslawa, overcome by her manner. "What have you discovered? Tell me, for heaven's sake. Restore peace to our family."

"Tell Count Christian that his son is alive and not far away. It is as true as that I love and respect you."

The canoness went at once to her brother, who had not yet come down stairs. A glance and sigh, however, from the chaplain, induced her to pause. "Let us not without care give such pleasure to my poor Christian," said she. "What if the fact should soon contradict your promises! Ah! my child, we would then be the murderers of the unfortunate father."

"Do you then doubt my word?" said Consuelo, amazed.

"God keep me from doing so, my noble Nina: you may be mistaken.—Alas! that often happens to us. You say you have proofs, my dear child—can you not mention them?"

"I cannot—at least it seems to me that I cannot," said Consuelo, with embarrassment. "I have discovered a secret, to which Count Albert certainly attaches much importance, and I cannot betray it without his consent."

"Without his consent!" said the canoness, looking at the chaplain with an expression of doubt. "Can she have seen him?"

The chaplain shrugged his shoulders imperceptibly, without understanding the grief he thus inflicted on Wenceslawa.

"I have not seen him," said Consuelo; "I will soon, however, do so, and so too will you. For that reason I shall be afraid, if I contradict his wishes, to prevent his return."

"May divine truth make its home in your heart, generous being," said Wenceslawa, looking at her anxiously and sorrowfully. "Keep your secret, if you have one, and restore Albert to us if you can. All I know is, that if this be ever realized, I shall kiss your knees as I now do your poor brow—humid and burning as it is," said she. After having kissed the young girl, she looked towards the chaplain with an excited air.

"If she is mad," she said to the latter, as soon as she could speak without witnesses, "she is yet an angel of goodness, and seems to be more occupied with our sufferings than we are ourselves. Ah! my father, there is a malediction, weighing over this house. All that have any sublimity of feeling are attacked with madness, and our life is passed in complaining of what we are forced to admire."

"I do much admire the kind emotions of this young stranger," said the chaplain. "You may, however, be sure that she is mad. She dreamed of Count Albert last night, and represents her visions as certainties. Be careful to leave undisturbed the pious and submissive heart of your brother. Perhaps, too, you should not encourage the temerity of this Signorina Porporina. They may precipitate her into dangers of another kind than those she has hitherto been willing to brave."

"I do not understand you," said the canoness, with grave *naiiveté*.

"I find not a little difficulty in explaining myself," said the worthy man. "Yet it appears to me, that if a secret understanding, innocent though it be, should be established between this young artist and the count——"

"Well?" said the canoness, staring.

"Well! madam do you not think that sentiments of interest and anxiety, innocent however they might be at first, from the force of circumstances and the influence of romantic ideas, may become dangerous to the repose and quiet of the young artist?"

"I never would have thought of that," said the canoness, who was struck with the reflection. "So you think, father, that Porporina can so far forget her humble and uncertain position, in associating with one so far above her as the Count of Rudolstadt, my nephew?"

"The Count of Rudolstadt might himself aid her in doing so, without the intention, however, from the manner in which he spoke of the advantage of rank and birth."

"You make me very uneasy," said Wenceslawa, all the family pride of whom was awakened.—"This was her only bad trait. Can the

idea have germinated in the young girl's mind? Can there be in her agitation and anxiety to find Albert, more than her attachment to us?"

"As yet I think not," said the canon, who had no wish but by his advice and counsel, to play an important part in the family, though he all the time preserved the air of obsequious submission. "You must, however, my dear daughter, keep your eyes open to the course of events, and your vigilance must never forget such dangers. This is a delicate *role*, and it suits you precisely. It requires the consolation with which God has gifted you."

After this conversation, the canoness seemed completely overcome. She forgot that Albert was, as it were, lost to her, and was now dying or dead, and remembered only the horrors of an unequal match, as she called it. She was like the Indian in the fable, who having ascended a tree while under the influence of terror in the form of a tiger, amused himself by driving a fly from his head.

She watched all day every motion of Porporina, and carefully analyzed every word and act. Our heroine—for such she was in every sense of the term—saw this, but did not attribute it to any other motive than the desire to see her keep her promise, by restoring Albert. She did not think it worth while to conceal her own agitation, so calm and quiet did her conscience seem, for she was rather proud of her plan than ashamed of it. This modest confusion, which a few days before had awakened the young count's enthusiasm, was dissipated at the touch of a serious determination, free from any personal vanity. The bitter sarcasms of Amelia, who had a presentiment of her enterprise, without any knowledge of its details, did not at all excite her; she scarcely heard her and replied to her by smiles. She suffered the canoness—the ears of whom were always open—the care of registering, commenting on, and interpreting them.

CHAPTER XL.

YET, when she saw herself watched by Wenceslawa as she had never been, Consuelo was afraid of being contradicted by mistaken zeal, and remained calm, cold, and cautious as possible, by means of which she escaped during the day, and went with a light heart to Schreckenstein. In doing so she had no idea but to meet Zdenko, and force him to an explanation, and make him inform her if he would take her to Albert. She found him near the castle, on the road to the mountain. He seemed to come towards her, and spoke Bohemian with great rapidity.

"Alas! I do not understand you," said Consuelo, when she was able to interrupt him. "I scarcely know German, that harsh language you hate, as the badge of slavery, and which reminds me of exile. Since, though, there is no other means for us to understand each other, speak it with me. We each understand it slightly, and I will learn Bohemian if you will teach me."

These words appealed to Zdenko's sympathies, and he gave Consuelo his hard hand, which she did not hesitate to clasp. "Blessed child," said he, "I will teach you my language and all my songs. What shall I begin with?"

Consuelo thought she would humor his whim by making use of the same means of interrogation. "I wish you," said she, "to sing me the ballad of Count Albert."

"There are," said he, "more than two hundred thousand ballads about my brother Albert. I cannot teach them to you, for you cannot understand them. I make new ones every day altogether different from the old ones. Ask something else."

"Why shall I not understand them? I am consolation. I am named Consuelo to you and to Count Albert, who alone knows me here."

"You Consuelo," said Zdenko, laughing in derision. "You do not know what you say; deliverance is bound."

"I know that; consolation is pitiless. You, though, know nothing, Zdenko. Liberty has broken its chains, and consolation its fetters."

"No, no. Folly and German words," said Zdenko, repressing his tricks and laughter, "you cannot sing."

"Yes, I can. Listen,"—and she sang the first verse of his song on the three mountains, which she had retained in her memory, and which Amelia had taught her to pronounce.

Zdenko listened with delight, and said, with a sigh, "I love you dearly; shall I teach you another song?"

"Yes; that of Count Albert, first in German; the Bohemian you shall teach me at some other time."

"How does it begin?" said Zdenko, looking mischievously at her.

Consuelo began in a low tone the song she had heard on the previous evening. "There is below, there is below, a soul in labor and pain."

"Ah! that was yesterday's song; to-day I have forgotten it," said Zdenko, interrupting her.

"Well, tell me to-day's."

"Let me have the first words. That you must tell me."

"The first words? Here they are,—'Count Albert is below in the cavern of Schreckenstein.'"

No sooner had she pronounced these words than Zdenko at once changed his air and manner. He stepped backwards several paces and lifted up his hands as if he was about to curse her. At the same time he began to speak Bohemian with all the energy of anger and menace.

At first she was alarmed, but seeing that he was about to go, she sought to retain him. He turned round, and seizing a stone, so large that he could scarcely hold it with his thin, skeleton hands, he said—"Zdenko hitherto has done wrong to no one; Zdenko would not break the wing of a fly, and if a child wished to kill him he would submit. If you look at me again—if you speak to me, false and treacherous Austrian, daughter of the evil one—Zdenko will crush you as he would a worm, and then cast himself into the torrent to wipe away the stain of human blood!"

Consuelo fled in terror, and met at the end of the path a peasant, who, amazed at seeing her run so pale and terror-stricken, asked her if she had met a wolf.

Consuelo, anxious to ascertain if Zdenko was liable to such attacks, told him she had met the innocent, who had frightened her.

"You should not fear him," said the peasant, smiling at what he thought her timidity. "Zdenko is a good fellow, and either laughs or sings, or tells stories which we do not understand, but which are very beautiful."

"But he gets angry sometimes, and then threatens and throws stones."

"No, no," said the peasant, "that never has happened, and never will. You must not be afraid of Zdenko, who is an angel."

When she had recovered, Consuelo thought the peasant must be right, and that by her imprudence she had provoked the only attack of madness he had ever suffered with. She reproached herself bitterly, and said—"I was too eager, and have awakened in the quiet soul of this man, deprived of what they proudly call reason, a suffering he has hitherto been ignorant of, but which will now take possession of him on every opportunity. He was a maniac, and perhaps I have made him incurably mad."

She became yet more sad when she sought for the motives of Zdenko's anger. It was now certain that her suspicions were verified of Albert's retreat in Schreckenstein. With what zealous care did Albert and Zdenko conceal the secret from them. She was not privileged—she had no influence over Count Albert, and this feeling which had induced him to call her his Consolation, the care he had taken the evening before to attract her attention by a symbolic chaunt, had been but a momentary whim, without any true and constant inspiration pointing to her rather than another as his consoler and liberatrix. This very word, Consolation, pronounced and divined by him, was a mere matter of chance. She had concealed from no one that she was Spanish, and her maternal language was yet more familiar to her than Italian. Albert, enchanted by her voice, and aware of no more energetic expression than that which expressed the idea he was so anxious about, and which so completely engrossed his imagination, had spoken in a tongue he knew perfectly, and which no one else about them understood.

Consuelo had never been so much deceived in this respect. Still, so fanciful and so ingenious a coincidence had seemed to her something providential, and her imagination had seized upon it without much examination.

But now everything was once more doubtful. Had Albert, in some new phase of his mania, forgotten the feeling he had experienced for her? Was she henceforth useless for his relief, powerless for his welfare? or was Zdenko, who had appeared so intelligent and earnest in seconding Albert's designs, more hopelessly deranged than Consuelo had been willing to suppose? Did he merely execute the orders of his friend, or did he completely forget them, when he furiously forbade to the young girl all approach to the Schreckenstein, and all in sight into the truth?

"Well," whispered Amelia on her return, "did you see Albert this evening floating in the sunset clouds? or will you make him come down the chimney to-night by some potent spell?"

"Perhaps so," replied Consuelo, a little provoked. It was the first time in her life that she felt her pride wounded. She had entered upon her enterprise with so pure and disinterested a feeling, so earnest and high-minded a purpose, that she suffered deeply at the idea of being bantered and despised for want of success.

She was dejected and melancholy all the evening; and the canonessa, who remarked the change, did not fail to attribute it to her fear of having disclosed the fatal attachment which had been born in her heart.

The canonessa was strangely deceived. If Consuelo had nourished

the first seeds of a new passion, she would have been an entire stranger to the fervent faith and holy confidence which had hitherto guided and sustained her. But so far from this, she had perhaps never experienced the poignant return of her former passion more strongly, than under these circumstances, when she strove to withdraw herself from it by deeds of heroism and a sort of exalted humanity.

When she returned to her room, she saw on her spinet an old gilded book with the coats of arms engraved on it. She saw at once it was an old book she had seen in Albert's room, and that Zdenko had taken away on the previous night. She opened it at the place where there was a mark. This was at the place where the psalm *De profundis clamavi ad te* begins. These Latin words were underlined with an ink which was as yet scarcely dried, for it had run into the next page. She looked through the whole book, which was a famous old Bible, known as that of de Kralic's, and published in 1579. She found in it no note, no indication whence it came. A simple cry, though, seemed to come from the earth, as it were from the abyss; not, perhaps, significative, but eloquent. What a contradiction there was between the formal and constant vow of Albert and the recent behavior of Zdenko.

This last idea arrested Consuelo's attention. Albert was sick and overcome at the depth of the cavern, which she supposed was beneath the Schreckenstein, and was perhaps retained there by the mad love of Zdenko. Perhaps he was a victim to this madman, who perhaps loved, though he kept him his prisoner. Yielding sometimes to his wish to return to the upper earth, and fulfilling all his messages to Consuelo, though sometimes he prevented his success, by interposing a kind of indefinite terror.

"Well," said she, "I will go, if I even have to confront the ridiculous folly of fools and egotists; I will go, even if the person who calls me dares to humiliate me by his indifference. How, though, can I be humiliated, if he is, perhaps, as mad as poor Zdenko? I shall only have to pity both of them; and then, I will have done my duty. I shall have obeyed the voice of God who inspires me, and his hand, which impels me with irresistible force."

The feverish state in which she had been for some days, and which since she had seen Zdenko, had replaced a painful languor, again exhibited itself in her soul and body. She regained all her power, and concealing from Amelia both her design and the book, exchanged various pleasant words with her, saw her go to sleep, and set out for the fountain of tears, with a little dark lantern she had procured on that very morning.

She waited for a long time, and was forced to go more than once into Albert's studio, to revive her half-chilled limbs by a warmer atmosphere. She ventured to look over this enormous mass of books not arranged on shelves as in a library, but cast pell-mell on the floor as if in contempt and disgust. She ventured to open several of them. Almost all of them were in Latin, and Consuelo at once conceived the idea that they were on religious controversy, and had either emanated from the Roman church, or been approved by it. She sought to ascertain their titles, but, just then, heard the water bubbling in the fountain. She went thither, putting out her light, and hid herself until Zdenko came. He, on this occasion, paused neither in the parterre nor in the library. He went through the two rooms, and left Albert's apartment, as Consuelo ascertained at a later time, to go and

listen at the oratory of Count Christian, to ascertain if the old man was awake in trouble, or sound asleep. This anxiety was always exerting not a little influence over him, though Albert, as we shall see by-and-by, had never thought about it.

Consuelo did not at all doubt about the course she should adopt: her plans had already been formed. She had no longer any confidence either in the honor or the benevolence of Zdenko, and wished to see him whom she considered a prisoner, and, as it were, under guard. There was certainly but one way of passing under ground from the castle cistern to Schreckenstein. If this way was difficult and dangerous, at all events, it was practicable, for Zdenko passed through it every night. At all events, light would be of advantage; and Consuelo had provided herself with light, a piece of steel, wadding, and a flint, to be able to strike a light whenever she pleased. What made her sure of reaching Schreckenstein in this manner, was an old story she had heard told by the canoness, in relation to a siege of the Teutonic knights.

"The knights," said Wenceslawa, "had in their very refectory a cistern, through which they obtained water from the neighboring mountain, and when their spies went out to watch the enemy, they exhausted the cistern, and passed through its subterranean conduits to a village which belonged to them."

Consuelo remembered that, according to the chronicle of the country, the village which was on the hill, known as Schreckenstein, had, since the conflagration, depended on the Giant's fortress, and had, in time of siege, maintained secret communications with it. She had, then, sufficient reason to search out this communication and this issue.

She took advantage of Zdenko's absence to descend into the well. Before she went, she recommended herself to God, and made the sign of the cross, as she did in the theatre of Saint Samuel, before she appeared on the stage, for the first time. She then descended the winding staircase, and looked for the chain, &c., which she had seen Zdenko hold on by, taking care, to avoid vertigo, not to look down. She got hold of the iron chain without any difficulty, and when she had done so, felt herself at ease. Then she ventured to look down. There was yet some water, and this discovery caused her not a little emotion. Soon, however, she recovered her presence of mind—the well might be very deep, yet the opening through which Zdenko came could not be very far down. She had already gone down fifty steps, with an address and activity of which young girls educated in drawing-rooms are ignorant, but which people of the lower orders acquire in their childhood's games, and the hardy confidence of which they preserve through all their life. The only real danger was in passing over damp steps. Consuelo found in one of the corners an old hat the Baron Frederick used to wear when he hunted. She took possession of it, and made sandals which she tied on her shoes, after the fashion of the old *cothurni*. She had observed that Zdenko was similarly shod. With his felt shoes Zdenko passed noiselessly through the corridors of the castle, and seemed to glide rather than walk. Thus the Hussites had been wont to shoe their spies, and even their horses, when they wished to surprise the enemy. At the fifty-second step, Consuelo found a kind of landing-place, with a stairway. She did not hesitate to enter it, and to advance, half-bent, into a narrow subterranean gallery, dripping with water, and which evidently had been wrought by the hand of man.

She proceeded down it without any difficulty, for some minutes, when she fancied she heard a slight noise behind her. Zdenko, perhaps, was returning to the mountain. She was, however, in advance of him, and increased her pace to avoid so dangerous a companion. He could not suspect that she was in advance of him. He had no reason to run after her; and, while he amused himself by muttering alone his complaints and interminable stories, she would be able to place herself under Albert's protection.

The noise she had heard increased, and became like that of water, which growls, struggles, and bursts forth. What had happened? Had Zdenko become aware of her intention? Had he pulled up the floodgate to destroy her? He could not do so, however, until he had passed her, and now he was behind her. This reflection gave her very little confidence. Zdenko was capable of destroying and of drowning himself rather than betray Albert. Consuelo, nevertheless, saw no floodgate, nothing to restrain the water. It must, therefore, come from below, yet the noise seemed to have its origin behind her. It increased, however, came nearer to her, and seemed to have the voice of thunder.

Suddenly Consuelo made a horrible discovery, and saw that the gallery, instead of ascending, descended, at first, gently, and then by a more rapid inclination. She had mistaken her way, in her anxiety, and in the dense vapor exhaled from the cistern, she had not seen the second and larger entrance, which was opposite the one she had taken. She had gone into the passage way, which served as a kind of escape pipe, instead of ascending the one which led to the reservoir or to the source. Zdenko, who had taken the opposite direction, had quietly lifted up the flood-gate, and the cistern was already filled to the level of the escape pipe. The water was already rushing into the gallery where Consuelo was, completely overcome by amazement. Ere long, this gallery, which was so contrived that the cistern, losing less water than it received, became filled, and had something to spare. In the twinkling of an eye, the escape was inundated, and began to roll down the declivity. The vault, already humid, bade fair ere long to be filled, and there was no prospect of escape. Rapidity of flight would not save the unhappy fugitive from the torrent. The air was already intercepted by the mass of water which was rushing down with a great noise. A stifling heat interfered with respiration, and did as much as fear and despair to suspend animation. Consuelo already heard the muttering of the stream. A red foam, the unpromising herald of the flood sped over the pavement, and preceded the uncertain steps of the terrified victim.

CHAPTER XLI.

"O MY mother!" she cried, "open thine arms to receive me! O Anzoleto, I love thee! O my God, receive my soul into a better world!"

Hardly had she uttered this cry of agony to heaven, when she tripped and stumbled over some object in her path. O surprise! O divine goodness! It is a steep and narrow staircase, opening from

one of the walls of the gallery, and up which she rushes on the wing of fear and of hope! The vault rises before her—the torrent dash forward—strikes the staircase which Consuelo had just time to clear—engulfs the first ten steps—wets to the ankle the agile feet which fly before it, and filling at last to the vaulted roof the gallery which Consuelo had left behind her, is swallowed up in darkness, and falls with a horrible din into a deep reservoir, which the heroic girl looks down upon from a little platform she has reached on her knees and in darkness.

Her candle had been extinguished. A violent gust of wind had preceded the irruption of the mass of waters. Consuelo fell prostrate upon the last step, sustained hitherto by the instinct of self-preservation, but ignorant if she was saved—if the din of this cataract was not a new disaster which was about to overtake her—if the cold spray which dashed up even to where she was kneeling, and bathed her hair, was not the chilling hand of death extended to seize her.

In the meantime, the reservoir is filled by degrees to the height of other deeper waste ways, which carry still farther into the bowels of the earth the current of the abundant spring. The noise diminishes, the vapors are dissipated, and a hollow and harmonious murmur echoes through the caverns. With a trembling hand, Consuelo succeeds in relighting her candle. Her heart beats violently against her bosom, but her courage is restored, and throwing herself on her knees, she thanks God. Lastly, she examines the place in which she is, and throws the trembling light of her lantern upon the surrounding objects. A vast cavern, hollowed by the hand of nature, is extended like a roof over an abyss into which the distant fountain of the Schreckenstein flows, and loses itself in the recesses of the mountain. This abyss is so deep that the water which dashes into it cannot be seen at the bottom; but, when a stone is thrown in, it is heard falling for the space of two minutes, with a noise resembling thunder. The echoes of the cavern repeat it for a long time, and the hollow and frightful dash of the water is heard still longer, and might be taken for the howlings of the infernal pack. At one side of this cavern a narrow dangerous path hollowed out of the rocks runs along the margin of the precipice, and is lost in another gallery where the labor of man ceases, and which takes an upward direction and leaves the course of the current as it turns towards more elevated regions.

This was the course Consuelo had to take. There was no other: the water having completely filled the one through which she had come. It was impossible to wait in the cavern for Zdenko. The dampness was deathly, and the torch began to grow pale, threatening to go out.

Consuelo is not paralysed by the horror of her situation. She is well aware that she is not going towards Schreckenstein. The subterranean galleries which open before her are a sport of nature, and lead to impassable places or labyrinths, an outlet to which she can never find. She will yet venture to enter them, though only for the purpose of having an asylum until the next night. On the next night Zdenko will return; he will shut off the current, and the captive will be able to retrace her steps, and see the light of the stars again.

Consuelo then sought to penetrate again the mysteries of the cavern. Her courage had revived; and, on this occasion, she was attentive to all the accidents of the soil, and was careful to follow only the

ascending paths, without consenting to turn aside to enter the more spacious galleries which she passed. By doing so, she was sure not to encounter any currents of water, and was able to retrace her steps.

She passed over a thousand obstacles: vast stones encumbered her route; from time to time huge bats, roused from their slumbers by the light of the lantern, came in whole battalions against her, and whirled around her steps. After the first emotions of surprise, she felt her courage increase at every new terror. Sometimes she ascended vast blocks of stone which had fallen from the vaults above, showing that other masses were ready to follow them, being now retained by but a slight hold in fissures, twenty feet above them. Then the passage became so narrow, that Consuelo was forced to crawl through an intensely close air to force her way. She had been walking thus for about half an hour, when having turned a sharp angle, where her lithe and supple body had much difficulty in passing, she fell from Charybdis into Scylla, meeting Zdenko face to face. Zdenko at first was petrified with surprise, and chilled by terror; but soon became indignant and furious as we have already seen him.

In this labyrinth, amid countless obstacles, by the quivering light of a torch, which, from want of air, was almost ready to go out—it was impossible to fly. The wild eye, the foaming lips of Zdenko, proved clearly enough that, on this occasion, he would not stop at menaces. He at once became strangely ferocious, and began to pick up large stones, placing them between Consuelo and himself, as if he would wall up the narrow gallery in which she was. Thus he was sure that if he did not empty the cistern for several days, she must die of hunger, precisely as the drone is starved to death, when the bee closes up its cell with wax.

Zdenko, however, made use of granite, and worked with strange rapidity. The physical power of this emaciated and apparently feeble man was so perfectly displayed, that Consuelo saw that resistance would be impossible, and that it was far better for her to find some means of escape by retracing her steps, than to irritate and force him to extremities. She sought to soothe, to persuade, and to subdue him by words.

“Zdenko,” said she, “what are you at? Albert will never forgive you. He calls me; I am his friend, his consolation, and salvation. You destroy him when you destroy me.”

Zdenko, afraid of being persuaded, and determined to carry out his idea, began to sing in his own tongue, in a loud and animated strain, working all the time at his Cycloplan task.

One stone alone was required to complete the edifice. Consuelo saw him place it with terror. “I shall,” said she, “never be able to pull down that wall. To do it a giant’s hands will be required.” The last stone was put up, and she saw that Zdenko was beginning another, leaning on the first. He was erecting a perfect fortress between Albert and herself. He continued to sing, and seemed to take pleasure in his toil.

A wonderful inspiration at last took possession of Consuelo. She remembered the famous heretical formula which had been explained by Amelia, at which the chaplain had been so much offended.

“Zdenko,” said she, in Bohemian, through one of the orifices of the disjointed wall, “let the one who has been injured salute you.”

This phrase worked on Zdenko like magic. He let the enormous block he held fall, uttering at the same time a deep sigh, and began to

destroy his wall with more rapidity than he had erected it. He then gave his hand to Consuelo, and assisted her to pass over the ruin after which he looked attentively at her, sighed strangely, and, giving her three keys tied together by a ribbon, pointed out the way to her saying, "Let the one who has been injured salute you."

"Will you not be my guide?" said she. "Take me to your master."

Zdenko shook his head, saying, "I have no master. I had a friend. You took him from me. Fate is being fulfilled. Go whither God directs you. I shall weep until you return."

Sitting down then on the ruins, he hid his face in his hands, and remained silent.

Consuelo did not wait to console him. She was afraid his madness would return; and, taking advantage of the moment when he respected her, set out like an arrow from the bow. In her uncertain and difficult journey Consuelo had not gone far, for Zdenko, proceeding by a longer route, but which was inaccessible to the water, had met her on the junction of the two caverns—the one made by the hand of man—and the other, strange, distorted and dangerous, surrounded the castle and its dependencies, and even the hill on which it was. Consuelo at this time had no doubt that she was under the park, yet she passed through the gratings in a manner that all the keys of the canoness could not prevent. She had an idea, after having proceeded for some distance on this route, to retrace her steps, and abandon an enterprise, in carrying out which she had already met with so many difficulties. Perhaps new difficulties yet awaited her. The ill temper of Zdenko might be aroused. What if she were pursued by him. He might build up a wall again to prevent her return. If, however, she abandoned her plan, and asked him to show her the way to the cistern, she might find him kind and gentle. She was too much excited, however, to venture again to meet this strange person. Her dread of him increased as she withdrew from him, and after having boldly confronted his anger, she became afraid when she thought of it. She fled from him without daring to do any thing to win his favor, and hoped alone to find one of the magic doors, the keys of which he had given her, to thus put a barrier between the madman and herself.

Was she not, however, about to meet Albert, another madman, whom she rashly persisted in thinking gentle and manageable, in a position similar to that of Zdenko towards her? Over the whole affair there was a thick veil; and when she had divested herself of the influence of romantic ideas, Consuelo thought herself the most delirious of the three, in having rushed into this abyss of dangers and mysteries, without being sure of a favorable result.

She passed through a spacious cavern, which had been admirably wrought by the iron hands of the men of the middle age. All the passages were cut in regular elliptical arches. The less compact portions, or chalky parts of the soil, wherever anything might give way, were sustained by well-cut stone columns, which united by the key-stones of this quadrangular vault. Consuelo lost no time in admiring this immense work, which had been constructed with a solidity that yet might defy centuries. She did not even ask how it chanced to be that the present owners of the castle were ignorant of so important a work. She might have explained it, had she remembered that all the historical papers of the family had been destroyed more than a hundred years before, at the epoch of the war of the Reformation. She did not,

however, look around her, for she thought of nothing but her own safety, being perfectly satisfied could she but find a plain surface, healthy air, and room to walk in. She had yet a long way to go, this direct path being longer than the tortuous winding of the mountain road, and being unable to find the light, she did not know whether the passage led to Schreckenstein or to some far more distant spot.

After walking about a quarter of an hour, she saw the arches expand again, and all traces of the work of art disappear. Man, however, had yet toiled in these vast passages and majestic grottoes, but vegetation having made its inroads, and receiving the air by numerous fissures, they looked a little less stern than the galleries. There were a thousand ways to avoid the pursuit of an angry enemy. A noise of rushing water, however, terrified Consuelo, and had she been able to jest in such a place, she would have confessed that Baron Frederick on his return from hunting had never been so much afraid of water as she was.

Yet she made use of her reason. She had constantly ascended since she left the precipice; and, unless Zdenko had control of an hydraulic machine of immense power, he could not bring his terrible auxiliary, the torrent, to act against her. It was also evident that somewhere or other she must meet the current, the flood-gate, or the spring itself. Had she used more reflection she would have been amazed at not having met this mysterious fountain of tears which filled up the cistern. The reason was, the fountain had its origin in the hidden veins of the mountain, and the gallery ran at right angles with it, only very near the cistern, and again at the mountain, in the same direction as she herself had come. The flood-gate was then far behind her, in the route Zdenko had gone alone, and Consuelo was drawing near the spring which for two centuries no one but Albert and Zdenko had seen. She soon saw the current, and followed it without either fear or danger.

A path of fresh sand led along this limpid and transparent stream, which ran with a cheerful noise through a bed carefully walled in. Here human labor again became apparent. This path was graded with rich and fertile soil, for beautiful aquatic plants, enormous wall-flowers, and wild brambles grew without shelter or protection. The external air penetrated through a multitude of orifices and crevices sufficiently to support vegetation, but which did not suffice to enable them to be seen from without. It was as it were a natural hot-house, protected from frost and snow, but ventilated by countless loopholes. One might have thought these beautiful plants had been carefully protected, and that the sand had been heaped up on the stones, to keep them from injuring the feet. This really was the case, for Zdenko had made Albert's retreat beautiful and approachable.

Consuelo had begun to feel the influence of a less stern and poetic aspect of external things on her imagination. When she saw the pale rays of the moon pass through the orifices of the rock and fall on the quivering water, when she felt the forest air from time to time fall on the motionless plants which were above the reach of the water, she knew she approached the surface of the ground and felt her strength revive. She began to picture to herself in the most lively colors the reception which awaited her. At last she saw the path turn aside from the stream and enter a newly-made gallery. She paused at a little door which seemed made of metal it was so cold, and around which a huge ivy hung like a frame.

When she saw herself at the termination of all her fatigues and doubts, when she placed her weary hand on this last obstacle, which she could pass instantly, for she had a key in the other hand, Consuelo hesitated, and experienced a timidity which was less easy to overcome than all her terrors. She was now about to enter a place closed to every eye, to every human thought, to disturb the slumbers or meditations of a man whom she scarcely knew, who was neither her father, brother, nor husband—who loved her, perhaps, but whom she neither could nor would love. “God,” said she, “has led me hither, amid the most wonderful dangers. Through his aid and protection I am come hither. I came with a fervent soul, a resolution full of charity, a tranquil breast, pure conscience, and a heart entirely sincere. Perhaps death awaits me, yet I am not afraid. My life is lonely, and I shall not be sorry to lose it. That I proved but a few moments ago and only an hour since, I saw myself devoted to a horrible death with a calmness which amazed myself. This is, perhaps, a grace God vouchsafes me at my last hour. I shall, it may be, fall beneath the blow of a madman, yet I march to that catastrophe with the firmness of a martyr. I have an ardent faith in the Eternal, and feel that if I perish here the victim perhaps of useless devotion, deeply religious though it be, I will be rewarded in a happier existence. What delays me? Why do I experience inextricable trouble, as if I were about to err, and blush before him I would save?”

Thus Consuelo, too modest to comprehend her very modesty, struggled against herself, and looked on the delicacy of her emotion almost as a crime. It, however, occurred to her that perhaps she might be exposed to a danger greater than death. Her chastity could not conceive the idea of her becoming the victim of a madman’s brutal passions. She became, however, instinctively afraid at seeming to obey a less exalted and less divine sentiment than that which animated her. She put the key in the lock, and made more than ten efforts before she could determine to turn it. An overpowering fatigue, an excessive weakness in her whole frame, destroyed her resolution, at the very moment she was about to be rewarded—on earth, by the performance of a noble act of charity!—in heaven, by a sublime death!

CHAPTER XLII.

NEVERTHELESS, her part was taken. She had received three keys, whence she judged that she had three doors to open and two apartments to traverse, before reaching that in which she supposed Albert to be a prisoner. She had, therefore, time enough to stop, in case her strength should fail her. She entered a vaulted chamber, containing no other furniture than a bed of dry heather, covered with a sheepskin. A pair of old-fashioned shoes, however, in a most remarkable state of dilapidation, served to indicate to her that this was Zdenko’s bed-chamber. She also recognised the small fruit-basket which she had left on the Stone of Terror, and which, after a lapse of two days, had at length disappeared. She determined now to open the second door, after having carefully closed the first; for she still reflected with terror on the possible return of the fierce possessor of that strange

abode. The second apartment into which she passed was vaulted like the first, but the walls were hung with matting and with wicker-work, stuffed with moss. A stove diffused a pleasant warmth through the chamber, and it was, beyond doubt, from its chimney pierced through the solid rock that the dreary light which Consuelo had seen on the summit of the Schreckenstein was produced. Albert's bed, like that of Zdenko's, was no more than a mass of dry leaves and grass; but Zdenko had covered it with a superb bear-skin, in spite of the absolute equality on which Albert insisted in their relations, and to which Zdenko agreed on all respects, where it did not clash with the extreme love he bore him, and the anxious preference which he himself awarded to his patron. In this apartment Consuelo was received by Cynabre, who when he heard the key turn in the lock, had taken his post on the threshold with a menacing eye and erected ear. But Cynabre had been educated by his master not as a guardian, but as a friend. He had been prohibited from his earliest youth to bay or howl, so that he had lost the natural habit of his species. Still, had any one approached Albert with evil intentions, he would have recovered his voice; had any one attacked, he would furiously have defended him. But, prudent and circumspect as a hermit, he never made the slightest noise without being sure of his ground, and without having carefully examined persons and scented their garments. He approached Consuelo with a look almost as intelligent as that of humanity, smelt her dress for some time, as well as her hand, in which she had been holding Zdenko's keys, and, as if completely satisfied by that circumstance, abandoned himself to the friendly recollections he had retained of her, and, rearing himself up on his hind legs, laid his great hairy paws on her shoulder, while he swept the ground with his fine tail in mute and stately joy. After that grave and decorous greeting, he returned and lay down on the corner of the bear-skin which covered Albert's bed, and stretched himself out on it with something of the lassitude of old age, but not without watching every movement of Consuelo with steady eyes.

Before she dared to approach the third door, Consuelo cast a glance over the arrangement of that hermitage, in order to derive from it if possible, some information as to the moral state of its occupant. She found in it no trace either of frenzy or despair. The greatest cleanliness, and even a sort of order, reigned throughout all its details. There was a cloak together with a change of garments hanging on the horns of the auroch—curiosities which Albert had brought home with him from the interior of Lithuania, and which here answered the purpose of clothes-hooks. His numerous books were all arranged on shelves of unplanned timber, supported by rustic branches, artistically interwoven by an intelligent hand. The table and two chairs were of the same material and workmanship. An herbal and some books of old music, unknown entirely to Consuelo, with titles in the Sclavonic tongue, completed the evidences of the calm and peaceful life led by the studious anchorite. An iron lamp, curious only from its antiquity, hung from the roof, burning with a clear light in the eternal gloom of that mournful sanctuary.

Consuelo further remarked that there was nothing like a weapon in the place. For, notwithstanding the taste of the magnates of that land for the chase, and the objects of luxury which accompany it, Albert possessed neither gun nor knife; and his old dog had never learned the grand science, on which account Cynabre had ever been

an object of contempt and pity to the Baron Frederick. Albert had a perfect horror of bloodshed, and, although he appeared to enjoy life less than any other person, he possessed a religious and unlimited respect for the idea of life in general. He could neither himself inflict death, nor look upon its infliction, even on the lowest animals of creation. He would have loved all natural sciences, but he had stopped short at botany and mineralogy. Entomology seemed even too cruel a science for his prosecution, for he could not endure to sacrifice even an insect to his curiosity.

Consuelo was aware of these peculiarities, and she recalled them all to mind as she looked on the various attributes of Albert's innocent pursuits. "No, I will not be fearful," she said to herself, "of a being so gentle and pacific. This is rather the cell of a saint than the dungeon of a madman." But the more she argued with herself on the nature of his mental malady, the more she felt embarrassed and agitated. She half regretted that she had not found him ill or deranged, and the very certainty that she was about to visit an actual man made her but hesitate the more.

She mused for a few moments, undecided how she should announce herself, when the sound of an admirable instrument fell upon her ear. It was a stradiarius, uttering an air of grand and mournful sublimity, under the touch of a pure and scientific hand. Never had Consuelo heard so perfect a violin, never an amateur whose style was so simple yet so touching. The music was unknown to her, but she judged from its singular and artless character that it was older than the oldest music she had ever heard. She listened in ecstasy, and now understood how it was that Albert had so perfectly comprehended her on hearing her sing one single passage. It was that he had himself the revelation of true and grand music. He might not be thoroughly scientific at all points—he might not possess all the dazzling resources of the art, but he had in him the divine inspiration, the intelligence and love of the beautiful. When he had ended, Consuelo was entirely reassured, and animated by a more lively sympathy, was on the point of knocking at the door which alone separated them, when it opened slowly, and the young count made his appearance, with his head bent forward, his eyes lowered, and his violin and bow hanging from his nerveless hands. His pallor was alarming, his clothes were in disorder, such as Consuelo had never seen before. His abstracted air, his sad and depressed carriage, the despairing carelessness of his movements, announced, if not total derangement, at least the last disorder and abandonment of human will and energy. He might have been taken for one of those dumb and senseless phantoms in whom the Slavonic races believe, who are seen at night to enter houses mechanically and to perform actions without end or object, obeying, as if by instinct, the habits of their past life, without recognising or even seeing their terrified friends or servants, who either fly from them or gaze at them in silence, frozen by fear and astonishment.

Such was Consuelo as she beheld Count Albert, and perceiving that he beheld her not, although she was within two paces of him. Cynabre had arisen from his bed, and was licking the hand of his master, who spoke to him kindly in the Bohemian tongue; then following the dog with his eyes, as he proceeded to offer his quiet caresses to Consuelo, still without lifting his head, he looked attentively at her feet, which were covered at this moment by shoes something like those of

Zdenko, and then spoke some more Bohemian words, which she did not understand, but which appeared to be an interrogation, and which terminated with her own name.

Seeing him in this state, Consuelo felt all her timidity vanish. Absorbed now entirely in compassion, she saw only the heart-sick invalid, who called for her, yet failed to recognise her when present; and, laying her hand firmly and confidently on the young man's shoulder, said to him in Spanish, in her pure and thrilling tones, "Consuelo is here."

CHAPTER XLIII.

SCARCELY had Consuelo mentioned her name, before Count Albert raising his eyes and looking her full in the face, altered his attitude and expression altogether. He let fall his precious violin on the ground, as recklessly as though he knew not the use of it, and clasping his hands together with an air of the deepest tenderness, and most respectful grief, "It is thou, then, whom I see at length in this place of suffering and exile, O my unhappy Wanda!" he exclaimed, uttering a sigh which seemed to rend his heart asunder. "Dear, dear, unhappy sister! unfortunate victim, whom I avenged too late, and whom I failed to defend! Ah! thou knowest, then, that the wretch who outraged thee perished in tortures, and that my hand was bathed ruthlessly in the blood of his accomplices. I opened the deepest vein of the accursed church, I washed away thy affront and my own, and that of my people, in rivers of gore—what wouldst thou more, unquiet and vindictive spirit? The time of zeal and wrath hath passed away the time of penitence and expiation is at hand. Ask from me tears and prayers, but ask for no more blood. Oh! I am henceforth sick of blood. I will shed none of it—no, not a drop! John Ziska will no longer fill his chalice save with tears inexhaustible and sighs of bitterness."

As he spoke thus, with bewildered eyes, and features animated by sudden enthusiasm, Albert moved around Consuelo, and recoiled from her in a sort of horror, at every movement she made to stop his fantastical adjuration.

Consuelo had no need of long reflection to comprehend the turn which his insanity had now taken. She had heard the history of John Ziska often enough to know that the sister of that formidable fanatic, being a nun before the outbreak of the Hussite war, had been outraged by an atrocious monk, and that the whole life of Ziska had been but one act of long and solemn vengeance for that crime. At this moment Albert, drawn back by I know not what transition of ideas, to his prevailing mania, believed himself John Ziska, and was addressing her as the shade of his unhappy sister Wanda.

She resolved not to contradict him too suddenly in his illusion, but said to him gently, "Albert, for thy name is no longer John, as mine is no longer Wanda, look at me steadfastly, and see that I am changed in character and countenance even as thou art. I come to remind thee of that, of which thou hast but now reminded me. Human justice is more than satisfied, and it is the day of heavenly justice

which I now announce to thee. God commands us to pardon and forget; these fatal recollections, this pertinacious resolution to exercise in thy person faculties which he grants not to other men, this fierce and perilous memory which thou dost retain of thy past existences, God now withdraws from thee, offended, because thou hast abused them. Dost thou hear me, Albert, and dost thou now comprehend me?"

"Oh! my mother," cried Albert, pale and trembling, falling on his knees and gazing at Consuelo with extraordinary dismay, "I hear you, and comprehend your words. I see that you have transformed yourself, in order to convince and subdue me. No: you are no longer the Wanda of Ziska, the outraged virgin, the weeping nun. You are the Wanda of Parachalitz, whom men have named the Countess of Rudolstadt, and who didst bear the wretch whom men now call Albert."

"It is not by the caprice of men that you are so called," replied Consuelo, fervently, "for it is God who caused you to live again, under new circumstances, and with new duties. These duties you know not, Albert, or if you do know, you despise them. You reascend the ladder of ages with an unholy pride; you aspire to pry into the secrets of destiny; you think to equal yourself to a God, embracing at a glance the present and the past. This is the truth. It is I who tell it to you. It is faith which inspires me to do so. This retrogressive thought is impious—it is a crime, a madness. This supernatural memory which you affect is an illusion. You have mistaken vague and fugitive gleams for a certain light, and your own imagination has made a mockery of you. Your own pride has built an edifice of chimeras, when you attribute to yourself the great deeds of your heroic ancestry. Beware that you become not that which you believe yourself to be. Fear, lest to punish you, Eternal Wisdom open not your eyes for one instant, and suffer you to behold in your own past life crimes less illustrious and subjects of remorse less glorious than those of which you dare to boast yourself."

Albert listened to this harangue with a sort of timid self-restraint, his face buried in his hands, and his knees pressed hard upon the ground.

"Speak—speak!" he cried, "O voice of heaven which I hear, yet fail to recognise," he murmured in half-smothered accents. "If you be the angel of this mountain, if you be, as I believe you are, the apparition which has appeared to me so often on the Stone of Terror, speak, command my will, my conscience, my imagination. You will know that I seek for the light with anguish; and, if I lose my way in the darkness, it is through the earnestness with which I strive to dissipate that darkness, in order to meet you."

"A little humility, a little confidence and submission to the decrees of that wisdom which is incomprehensible to men, these are for you, Albert, the road to truth. Renounce in your soul, renounce firmly, once, and that forever, the desire of knowing yourself beyond the existence of this transitory life which is imposed on you, and you will again become acceptable to God, useful to other men, and at peace with yourself. Descend from your haughty science, and without losing faith in your immortality, without doubting the divine goodness which pardons the past and protects the future, attach yourself to the attempt of rendering humane and pleasant this present life which you despise, when you ought rather to respect it, and to devote

to it entire yourself, with all your energy, your self-denial and your charity. Now, Albert, look at me, and let your eyes be unsealed. I am neither your mother nor your sister, I am a friend sent to you by heaven, and led hither by miraculous ways to reconduct you from the regions of pride and insanity. Look at me, and tell me, in your heart, and on your conscience, who am I?"

Albert, trembling and embarrassed, raised his head, and looked at her once more, but with less wildness and alarm than before. "You compel me to cross abysses," he said. "You confound my reason by the depth of your words, which I believed superior to my misfortune to that of all other men, and you command me to comprehend the present time and the things of humanity. I cannot do it. In order to lose the memory of certain phases of my life, I must undergo terrible crises; and in order to discover the sentiment of a new phase, I must transform myself by efforts which lead me to agony. If you command me by virtue of a power which I feel superior to my own, to assimilate my thoughts to yours, I must obey; but I know the terror of these struggles, and I know that death is at the end of them. Have pity on me, you who govern me with a sovereign spell, aid me or I fall. Tell me who you are, for I know you not. I remember having seen you, I know not of what use you are, yet here you stand before me like some mysterious statue, the type of which I vainly seek in my recollections. Help me! help me! or I feel that I die."

As he spoke thus, Albert's face, which had at first been flushed with a feverish return of animation, again became fearfully pale. He stretched his hands out for a moment towards Consuelo, and then lowered them to the ground, as if to save himself from falling under a weakness which he could not resist. Consuelo, who began by degrees to comprehend the nature of his mental malady, felt herself animated with renewed strength, and inspired as it were by a novel intelligence and power. She took his hands, gently compelled him to arise, and led him to a seat beside the table. He let himself sink upon it, overpowered by ineffable weariness, and bowed forward as if he were on the point of fainting. The strife of which he spoke was but too real. Albert had the faculty of recovering his reason and banishing the suggestions of that delirium which suffused his brain; but he only succeeded in doing so, through efforts which exhausted all his powers. When this reaction occurred spontaneously, he found himself refreshed, and as it were renewed. But when he brought it on by a resolution of his own will, his body failed under the crisis, and all his limbs were seized with catalepsy. Consuelo understood what was passing within him. "Albert," said she, laying her cold hand on his burning head, "I know you, and that suffices. I take an interest in you, and that ought to satisfy you for the present. I forbid you to make any effort to recognise or speak to me at present; listen to me only, and do not even exert yourself too much to understand me, I only ask of you passive submission and a total abandonment of all reflection. Can you not descend into your heart, and there concentrate the whole of your existence?"

"Oh! how much good you do me," exclaimed Albert. "Speak to me yet again—speak to me ever thus. You hold my soul in your hands. Whoever you be, keep it; suffer 't not to escape, or it will go knock at the gates of eternity, and there will perish. Tell me, who are you? Tell me quickly; and if I understand not, explain to me; for, in my own despite, I seek and am agitated."

"I am Consuelo," replied the young girl; "and you know it, since you converse with me instinctively in a language which I alone of all your friends can understand. I am the friend whom you have long expected, and whom you recognised that day when I was singing. From that day, you forsook your family and concealed yourself here, and you summoned me hither several times by means of Zdenko; while Zdenko, though to a certain degree he obeyed your commands, would not conduct me hither. I have come, however, through a thousand dangers."

"You could not have come if Zdenko had not permitted you," replied Albert, raising his body, which had rested heavily and faintly on the table. "You are a dream, I perceive it clearly, and what I hear you say, is the mere effect of my own imagination. Oh! my God! you excite me with false joys, and on a sudden the disorder and incoherency of my dreams reveal themselves, even to myself, and I find myself alone—alone in the world—with my despair and my madness. Oh! Consuelo, Consuelo!—fatal, yet delicious dream!—where is the being who assumes your name, and sometimes wears your likeness? No! save in myself, you have no existence; and it is my delirium only which gave you birth."

Albert sank down again on his extended arms, which became as cold and stiff as marble. Consuelo saw that he was fast falling into his lethargic crisis, and at the same time felt herself so much exhausted, and so near to fainting, that she doubted her power to conquer the crisis. She strove, however, to revivify the hands of Albert between her own, which were, in truth, hardly more living than her patient's. "Heaven!" she said, in a faltering voice, and with a broken spirit, "aid two unhappy beings who lack the power to assist one another!" She felt herself alone, shut up with a half-dying man, half dead herself, and with no hope of assistance for either, unless it were from Zdenko, whose return she looked for with far more of alarm than hope.

Her prayer, however, appeared to strike Albert with an unexpected emotion. "Some one," said he, endeavoring to raise his bewildered head, "some one is praying near me. I am not alone," he added, looking at Consuelo's hand, which he held firmly grasped between his own. "Oh! aiding hand—mysterious pity—human, fraternal sympathy—you render my agony less agonizing—you fill my heart with gratitude." And he pressed his icy lips on the hand of Consuelo, and remained long in that attitude.

An emotion of modesty recalled Consuelo to the consciousness of life. She dared not withdraw her hand from the poor wretch; but divided between her embarrassment and her exhaustion, unable to hold herself any longer erect, she was forced to lean upon him, and to rest her other hand upon Albert's shoulder.

"I feel myself revived," cried Albert, after a few moments had elapsed. "I fancy that I am in the arms of my mother. Oh! my aunt, Wenceslawa, if this be you, pardon me that I have forgotten you—you, and my father, and all my family, whose very names had fallen from my memory. I return to you; leave me not, but restore to me Consuelo, Consuelo—her whom I so long awaited—her whom I found at last, only to love again; for without her I cannot breathe."

Consuelo would have spoken to him; but in proportion as Albert's memory and life seemed to return, in like proportion did Consuelo's seem to fall her. Such a succession of fears, fatigues, emotions,

efforts, almost superhuman, had broken her down so that she could struggle against them no longer. The words died on her lips, she felt her knees give way under her, and her eyes lose their vision. She dropped on her knees by Albert's side, and her fainting head fell heavily against the young man's bosom. Then Albert, starting as if from a dream, saw her, recognised her, uttered a loud cry, and, recovering himself, caught her energetically in his arms. Through the veils of death which appeared to be closing over her eyelids, Consuelo beheld the joy which beamed from all his features, and was not alarmed by it; for it was a chaste and holy joy. She closed her eyes and fell into that state of languid unconsciousness which is neither sleep nor waking, but a sort of indifference and insensibility to all things present.

CHAPTER XLIV.

So soon as she recovered the use of her faculties, before she was yet able to lift her eyelids, finding herself seated on a hard bed, she endeavored to collect her memories. But her prostration had been so complete that her powers returned to her but slowly, and, as if the sum of the fatigues and emotions which she had endured for so long a time had completely overpowered her, she sought in vain to remember what had befallen her since leaving Venice. Her very departure from that adopted country, in which her days had flowed away so softly, appeared to her a dream; and it was a consolation to her—though, alas! too short—to be able to doubt for an instant her exile and the misfortunes which had led to it. She persuaded herself, then, that she was still in her poor chamber in the Corte Minelli, on her mother's pallet, and that, after a violent and bitter scene with Anzoletto, some confused memory of which floated through her spirit, she was recovering life and hope, finding him by her side, hearing his interrupted breath, and the sweet words which he whispered in her ear. A languid and delicious joy filled her heart at the idea, and she made an effort to rise and look at her repentant lover, and offer him her hand. But the hand which she encountered was a cold and strange one; and in lieu of the smiling sun which she was wont to see shining redly through her white curtains, she saw only a sepulchral light, streaming downward from a dark vault, and floating through a damp and misty atmosphere; she felt the skin of some wild beast stretched out beneath her, and, in the midst of an appalling trance, she saw the pale face of Albert leaning over her like a spectre.

Consuelo believed that she had gone down alive into the tomb, and fell back on the bed of dry leaves with a groan of horror. It required yet that several minutes should pass before she understood where she indeed was, and to the care of how fearful a host she was entrusted. Fear, which up to this moment the enthusiasm of her devotedness had combatted and conquered, took possession of her to such a degree, that she was afraid to open her eyes, lest they should meet some hideous spectacle—the preparations of a death-bed, or a grave open before her. She felt something upon her brow, and raised her hand to it. It was a wreath of foliage with which Albert had crowned her; she took it off and looked at it, it was a cypress

"I thought thee dead!—O, my soul!—O, my Consolation!" said Albert, kneeling beside her, "and I wished before following thee to the grave to adorn thee with the symbols of hymeneals. The dark cypresses were the only branches from which my hand could pluck the bridal wreath. Behold it! Refuse it not! If we must die here, let me swear to thee that, restored to life, never could I have any bride but thee, and that I die with thee, united to thee by an indissoluble oath!"

"Afflanced! united!" exclaimed Consuelo, in terror. "Who is it, then, that has pronounced this decree? Who, then, has celebrated these hymeneals?"

"It is destiny, my angel," replied Albert, with inexpressible sweetness and melancholy. "Dream not that you can escape from it. It is a strange destiny for thee—a stranger yet for me. You comprehend me not, Consuelo, and yet you must learn the truth. You forbade me but now to look back into the past; you interdicted to me the memory of those by-gone days, which are called the night of ages. My whole being obeyed you, and I know no more of my anterior existences; but my present life I have interrogated—I know it—I have it all before me in one eye-glance; it appeared before me instantaneously, while you appeared to be reposing in the arms of death. Your destiny, Consuelo, is to belong to me, and yet you will never be mine. You love me not; you will never love me as I love you. Your love for me is only charity, and the devotedness of heroism. You are a saint whom God has sent to me, and to me you will never be a woman. I must die consumed by a love which you cannot partake; and yet, Consuelo, you will be my bride, as you are now my betrothed, whether we perish here, and your pity consent to give me that title of husband, which no kiss will ever ratify; or whether we revisit the sun, and thy conscience compel you to accomplish the designs of God toward me."

"Count Albert," said Consuelo, endeavoring to arise from that bed, covered with a black bear-skin, which resembled a pall; "I know not whether it is the enthusiasm of a gratitude far too lively for its object, or the consequences of your delirium, which lead you to speak thus. I have no longer the power to combat your illusions, and if they are now to be turned against me—against me, who have come at the risk of my life to succor and console you—I feel that it is not in my power to dispute with you, either my liberty or my life. If the sight of me irritate you, and God forsake me, let the will of God be done! You, who think you know so much, must know how my life is poisoned, and with how little regret I should surrender it."

"I know that you are miserable, my poor saint! I know that you wear on your brow a crown of thorns, which I cannot tear from it. The cause and the consequence of thy misfortunes, I know not, and I ask them not. But I should love thee much less, and I should be much less worthy of thy compassion, if on the day when I first met thee, I had not perceived the sadness which fills thy soul and steepes thy life in bitterness. What can you fear from me, Consuelo? You who are so firm and prudent; you to whom God has inspired words which subjugated me and conquered me in an instant. You must feel a strange falling off in the light of your reason and your faith, since you so dread your friend, your servant, and your slave? Return to me, my angel—look at me. Behold me at your feet, for I am even prostrate in the dust. What sacrifice do you require of me? What

oath must I offer you? I can promise to obey you in all things. You, Consuelo, I could become a self-controlled man, submissive, and to all appearance as reasonable as other men. Hitherto I have never had the power to do that which I desire to do; but henceforth all that thou wouldst of me shall be granted. Perhaps I may die in the act of transforming myself in accordance to your desire, but it is my part to tell you that my life would always have been poisoned, and that I should not regret it so long as I lost it for you."

"Generous and noble Albert," said Consuelo, "explain yourself more clearly, and let me understand the depths of your impenetrable spirit. In my eyes you are the greatest of men, and from the first day of my beholding you, I conceived a respect for you, which I had no cause to dissemble. I was always told that you are mad—I always disbelieved it. All that was said to me of you, added to my esteem for you. Still I was compelled to admit, that you were overpowered by a deep and fantastical moral disease. I persuaded myself, presumptuously perhaps, but sincerely, that I could assuage this disease. You led me yourself to believe so. I came to seek you out, and now you speak to me in a manner that would fill me with conviction, respect, and veneration for you and for myself, to a degree for which I cannot account, if you did not mingle with your arguments strange ideas, intermingled with a spirit of fatalism, of which I never could be a partaker. May I say all that I would say, without wounding your feelings?"

"Speak what you will, Consuelo; I know beforehand all that you would say to me," replied Albert.

"I will speak, then, for I had promised myself so to do. All those who love you, despair of you. It is their duty, they imagine, to respect—or, in other words, to deceive your delirium. They are afraid of exasperating you, by suffering you to perceive that they are aware of it—that they it, and fear it. I have no such terrors, nor have I the least hesitation in asking you—Wherefore, being so wise, you act at times like a madman? wherefore, being so good, you commit acts of ingratitude and pride? wherefore, being so enlightened and so religious, you abandon yourself to the reveries of a diseased and despairing spirit? wherefore, in conclusion, I find you here buried in a melancholy cavern, afar from your family, which seeks you and deplores your absence; afar from your equals, who love you with ardent affection; afar from me, last of all, whom you summon, and whom you say that you love, and who has found you by a miraculous exertion of will, and by divine protection?"

"You ask me the secret of my life, the key-word of my destiny, and you know it better than I do myself. Consuelo, it is from you that I expected the revelation of my existence, and you question me of it. Oh! I understand you; you desire to lead me to confession; to an efficacious repentance, to a victorious resolution. You shall be obeyed. But it is not now that I can recognise myself, judge myself, transform myself, at a moment's notice. Give me a few days, give me at least a few hours to learn myself, and thereafter to teach you, whether I am indeed a madman, or whether I enjoy my reason. Alas! alas! both are true, and it is my misfortune that I doubt it. But to ascertain whether I must entirely lose my judgment and my reason, or whether I can triumph over the demon which besets me—this is what I cannot make out at this instant. Have pity on me, Consuelo; I am still overpowered by emotions too strong for my control. I am ignorant what

I have said to you; I know not how many hours have elapsed since you have been here; I know not how you can be here at all without Zdenko, who would not bring you hither; I know not where my thoughts were wandering when you entered! Alas! I know not how many centuries I have been shut up here, struggling with unheard of sufferings, against the plague which devours me. Of these sufferings themselves, I have no consciousness when they are once overpast; I only feel the fatigue which remains after them; a stupor and a sort of terror, which I strive in vain to banish. Consuelo, suffer me to forget, if it be but for a few minutes. My ideas will become more luminous, my tongue will be relaxed. I promise you, I swear it to you. Give me only by degrees this light of reality, which has been so long closed against me by hideous darkness, and which my eyes cannot, as yet, endure. You have commanded me to concentrate my whole life in my heart. I remember that you told me that, for from that instant date my memory and my reason. Well! that one word has poured an angelic calmness into my bosom. My heart now lies entire and unwounded, although my reason slumbers yet. I could still bewilder myself, and terrify you by my reveries. I will henceforth live only in my feelings, which to me will be a life unknown; but it will be a life of delight, if I could but abandon myself to it without displeasing you. Ah! Consuelo, wherefore did you command me to concentrate my whole life within my heart: explain yourself. Suffer me to have no object in life save yourself only. To occupy myself with you alone—to see, to comprehend you only—in one word, to love you. Oh, Heaven! I love—I love a being similar to myself; I love with all the power of my existence; I lavish on her all the ardor, all the sincerity, all the sanctity of my affection. It is surely happiness enough for me to be allowed this, and I will ask no more.”

“Be it so, dear Albert. Repose your diseased spirit in that sweet sentiment of peaceable fraternal tenderness. God is my witness that you may do so without fear or danger, for I feel toward you a fervent friendship, and a sort of veneration which no frivolous conversations or vain reasonings have power to shake. You have understood by some mysterious and strange instinct, that my life also is broken by sorrow. You said so, and it is truth from on high, that must have inspired you with the knowledge. I could not love you otherwise than as a brother; yet, say not that it is charity or pity only which is my guide. If humanity and compassion gave me the courage to come hither, a sympathy, nay a particular esteem for your virtues, give me also the courage and the right to speak to you as I do. Abjure, then, now and forever, the illusion under which you labor concerning the nature of the sentiment you feel toward me. Speak to me of love no more, nor of marriage. My past years, my memories, would render that impossible, and the difference of our conditions. If you return to such ideas, you will render my devotion to you rash, perhaps improper. Let us seal this engagement which I now make, to be your sister, your friend, your consoler, by a sacred oath. Swear to me that you will never look for aught else in me, and that you will never love me otherwise.”

“Generous woman,” said Albert, growing pale, “you reckon much on my courage, and much on my love, when you ask such a pledge of me. I might be base enough to speak falsely, nay, to swear falsely should you require it of me. But you will not require it, Consuelo. You will perceive that this were but to agitate me anew. Be not

easy, therefore, as to how I love you; I scarcely know that myself; only I feel that to withdraw the name of love from the sentiment which I feel were blasphemy. I accept your pity, your care, your sisterhood, your passionless and peaceful attentions. I will not have so much as one expression of the face or a glance of the eye, that should offend you. Be at ease, therefore, my sister, and my consoler. I swear to be your brother, and your servant. But ask no more of me. I will be neither importunate, nor indiscreet. It will suffice me that you know you may command me, and govern me despotically, not as a brother is governed, but as a being who is given up to you, wholly and for ever."

CHAPTER XLV.

FOR the moment Consuelo was satisfied with this language, though it did not leave her without much apprehension for the future. The almost fanatical self-denial of Albert, evidently had its source in a deep and real passion, of the truth of which his serious countenance and solemn speech left no possible doubt. Consuelo, though deeply touched, was greatly disturbed, and asked herself secretly how she could devote herself to the care of a man so deeply and unreservedly attached to herself. She had never thought lightly of such relations, and she saw at a glance that Albert was not a man with whom any woman could incur them without the risk of perilous consequences. She did not doubt either his good faith, or his plighted word, but she saw that the calmness to which she had hoped to restore him, was not compatible with ties of this nature. She offered him her hand with a sigh, but she continued for a few moments in deep thought; at last she said, raising her eyes from the ground, "Albert, you do not know me when you ask me to undertake such a charge. No woman could undertake it, but one capable of abusing it. I am neither proud, nor a coquette, and I do not believe myself to be vain; but I have no desire for domination. Your love would flatter me, could I return it, and if it were so I would tell you forthwith. To afflict you, in your present condition by reiterated assurances to the contrary is an act of cold-blooded cruelty which you ought to spare me, and which is, nevertheless, forced upon me against my will. Pity me, then, for being forced to distress you, perhaps to offend you, and at a moment when I would give up my own life to restore you to health and to happiness."

"I know it, high-souled maiden," said Albert, with a melancholy smile. "You are so good, so great, that you would give your life for the meanest creature; but I know that your conscience will bend to no one. Do not then fear to offend me in displaying this sternness which I admire—this stoical coldness, which your virtue maintains along with the most moving pity. It is not in your power to afflict me, Consuelo. I am not the sport of illusion; I am accustomed to bitter grief; my life has been made up of painful sacrifices. Do not then treat me as a visionary, as a being without heart, and without self-respect, in repeating what I already know, that you will never love me. Consuelo, I am acquainted with the circumstances of your

life, although I know neither your name, nor family, nor any important fact concerning you. I know the history of your soul; the rest does not concern me. You loved, you still love, and you will always love, one of whom I know nothing, whom I do not wish to know and with whom I shall never compete. But know, Consuelo, that you shall never be his, or mine, or even your own. God has reserved for you a separate existence, of which the events are hidden from me, but of which I foresee the object and end. The slave and victim of your own greatness of soul, you will never receive in this life, other recompense than the consciousness of your own power and goodness. Unhappy in the world's estimation, you will yet be the most serene and the most fortunate of human creatures, because you will ever be the best and the most upright; for the wicked and the base, dearest sister, are alone to be pitied, and the words of Christ will remain true as long as men continue blind and unjust:—"Happy are those who are persecuted; happy those who weep, and who labor in trouble."

The power and dignity which were at this moment stamped upon the lofty and majestic forehead of Albert, exercised over Consuelo so great a fascination that she forgot the part of proud sovereign and austere friend, which she had imposed upon herself, to bow to the spell of this man's influence, so inspired by faith and enthusiasm. She supported herself with difficulty, still overwhelmed with fatigue and emotion, and trembling from excess of weariness, she sank on her knees, and clasping her hands, began to pray fervently and aloud: "If thou, my God," she exclaimed, "dost put this prophecy in the mouth of a saint, thy holy will be done! In my infancy I besought from thee an innocent and childlike happiness; but thou hast reserved for me happiness under a severe and rude form, which I am unable to comprehend. Open thou mine eyes—grant me an humble and contrite heart. I am willing, oh, my God, to submit to this destiny, which seems so adverse, and which so slowly revealed itself, and only ask from thee that which any of thy creatures is entitled to expect from thy loving justice, faith, hope, and charity."

While praying thus, Consuelo was bathed in tears, which she did not seek to restrain. After such feverish agitation, this paroxysm served to calm her troubled feelings, while it weakened her yet more. Albert prayed and wept along with her, blessing the tears which he had so long shed in solitude, and which now mingled with those of a pure and generous being.

"And now," said Consuelo, rising, "we have thought long enough of what concerns ourselves; it is time to think of others, and to recollect our duties to them. I have promised to restore you to your family, who already mourn and pray for you as for one dead. Do you not desire, my dear Albert, to restore joy and peace to your afflicted relatives? Will you not follow me?"

"So soon!" exclaimed the young count in despair; "separate so soon, and leave this sacred asylum, where God alone is with us—this cell, which I cherish still more since you have appeared to me in it—this sanctuary of a happiness which I shall perhaps never again experience—to return to the false and cold world of prejudices and customs. Ah! not yet, my soul, my life! Suffer me to enjoy yet a day, yet an age of delight. Let me here forget that there exists a world full of deceit and sorrow, which pursues me like a dark and troubled dream; permit me to return by slow degrees to what men call reason. I do not yet feel strong enough to bear the light of their sun, and the

spectacle of their madness. I require to gaze upon your face and listen to your voice yet longer. Besides, I have never left my retreat from a sudden impulse, or without long reflection—my endeared, yet frightful retreat, this terrific yet salutary place of expiation, whither I am accustomed to hasten as with a wild joy, without once looking back, and which I leave with doubts but too well founded, and with lasting regret. You know not, Consuelo, what powerful ties attach me to this voluntary prison—you know not that there is here a second self, the true Albert, who will not leave it—a self which I ever find when I return, and yet which besets me like a spectre when I leave it. Here I have conscience, faith, light, strength—in a word, life. In the world there are fear, madness, despair—passions which sometimes invade my peaceful seclusion, and engage with me in a deadly struggle. But behold! behind this door there is an asylum where I can subdue them and become myself again. I enter sullied with their contact, and giddy from their presence—I issue purified, and no one knows what tortures purchase this patience and submission. Force me not hence, Consuelo, but suffer me gradually and by prayer to wean my attachment from the place.”

“Let us then enter and pray together,” said Consuelo; “we shall set out immediately afterwards. Time flies; the dawn is perhaps already near. They must remain ignorant of the path which leads to the castle, they must not see us enter together; for I am anxious not to betray the secret of our retreat, and hitherto no one suspects my discovery. I do not wish to be questioned, or to resort to falsehoods. I must be able to keep a respectful silence before your relatives, and suffer them to believe that my promises were but presentiments and dreams. Should I be seen to return with you, my absence would seem disobedience; and although, Albert, I would brave everything for you, I would not rashly alienate the confidence and affection of your family. Let us hasten then; I am exhausted with fatigue, and if I remain here much longer I shall lose all my remaining strength, so necessary for this new journey. We shall pray and then depart.”

“Exhausted, say you? Repose here, then, beloved one. I will guard you religiously, or if my presence disturbs you, you shall shut me up in the adjacent grotto; close this iron door between us, and whilst, sunk in slumber, you forget me, I shall, until recalled by you, pray for you in my church.”

“But reflect that while you are praying and sunk in repose, your father suffers long hours of agony, pale and motionless as I once saw him, bowed down with age and grief, pressing with feeble knees the floor of his oratory, and apparently only awaiting the news of your death to resign his last breath. And your poor aunt’s anxiety will throw her into a fever, incessantly ascending, as she does, the highest towers of the castle, vainly endeavoring to trace the paths to the mountain, by one of which it is supposed you departed. This very morning the members of your family, when they assemble together in the chateau, will sorrowfully accost each other with fruitless inquiries and conjectures, and again separate at night with despair and anguish in their hearts. Albert, you do not love your relatives, otherwise you would not thus, without pity or remorse, permit them to suffer and languish.”

“Consuelo! Consuelo!” exclaimed Albert, as if awaking from a dream, “do not speak to me thus; your words torture me. What

crime have I committed?—what disasters have I caused?—Why are my friends thus afflicted? How many hours have passed since I left them?”

“You ask how many hours! Ask rather how many days—how many nights—nay, how many weeks!”

“Days!—nights! Hush! Consuelo, do not reveal to me the full extent of my misfortune. I was aware that I here lost correct ideas of time, and that the remembrance of what was passing on the earth did not descend with me into this tomb; but I did not think that the duration of this unconsciousness could be measured by days and weeks.”

“Is it not, my friend, a voluntary obliviousness? Nothing in this place recalls the days which pass away and begin again: eternal darkness here prolongs the night. You have not even a glass to reckon the hours. Is not this precaution to exclude all means of measuring time, a wild expedient to escape the cries of nature and the voice of conscience?”

“I confess that when I come here, I feel it requisite to adjure everything merely human. But O God! I did not know that grief and meditation could so far absorb my soul as to make long hours appear like days, or days to pass away as hours. What am I, and why have they never informed me of this sad change in my mental organization?”

“This misfortune is, on the contrary, a proof of great intellectual power, but diverted from its proper use, and given up to gloomy reverie. They try to hide from you the evils of which you are the cause. They respect your sufferings whilst they conceal their own. But in my opinion it was treating you with little esteem; it was doubting the goodness of your heart. But Albert I do not doubt you, I conceal nothing from you.”

“Let us go, Consuelo, let us go,” said Albert, quickly throwing his cloak over his shoulders. “I am a wretch! I have afflicted my father whom I adore, my aunt whom I dearly love. I am unworthy to behold them again. Ah! rather than again be guilty of so much cruelty, I would impose upon myself the sacrifice of never revisiting this retreat. But, no: once more I am happy, for I have found a friend in you, Consuelo, to direct my wandering thoughts and restore me to my former self. Some one has at length told me the truth, and will always tell it to me. Is it not so, my dear sister?”

“Always, Albert; I swear to you that you shall ever hear the truth from me.”

“Power divine! and the being who comes to my aid is she to whom alone I can listen—whom alone I can believe. The ways of God are known but to himself. Ignorant of my own mental alienation, I have always blamed the madness of others. Alas, Consuelo! had my noble father himself told me of that which you have just disposed, I would not have believed him. But you are life and truth; you can bring conviction, and give to my troubled soul that heavenly peace which emanates from yourself.”

“Let us depart,” said Consuelo, assisting him to fasten his cloak, which his trembling hand could not arrange upon his shoulders.

“Yes, let us go,” said he, gazing tenderly upon her as she fulfilled this friendly office; “but first swear to me, Consuelo, that if I return hither you will not abandon me, swear that you will come to seek me, were it only to overwhelm me with reproaches—to call me ingrate,

parricide — and to tell me that I am unworthy of your solicitude. Oh! leave me not a prey to myself now that you see the influence you have over my actions, and that a word from your lips persuades and heals, where a century of meditation and prayer would fail."

"And will you, on your part," replied Consuelo, leaning on his shoulder, and smiling expressively, "swear never to return hither without me?"

"Will you indeed return with me!" he rapturously exclaimed, looking earnestly in her face, but not daring to clasp her in his arms; "only swear this to me, and I will pledge myself by a solemn oath never to leave my father's roof without your command or permission."

"May God hear and receive our mutual promise!" ejaculated Consuelo, transported with joy. "We will come back to pray in your church; and you, Albert, will teach me to pray, as no one has taught me hitherto; for I have an ardent desire to know God. You, my friend, will reveal heaven to me, and I when requisite will recall your thoughts to terrestrial things and the duties of human life."

"Divine sister!" exclaimed Albert, his eyes swimming in tears of delight, "I have nothing to teach you. It is you who must be the agent in my regeneration. It is from you I shall learn all things, even prayer. I no longer require solitude to raise my soul to God. I no longer need to prostrate myself over the ashes of my fathers, to comprehend and feel my own immortality. To look on you is sufficient to raise my soul to heaven in gratitude and praise."

Consuelo drew him away, she herself opening and closing the doors. "Here, Cynabre!" cried Albert to his faithful hound, giving him a lantern of better construction than that with which Consuelo was furnished, and better suited to the journey they were about to undertake. The intelligent animal seized the lamp with an appearance of pride and satisfaction, and preceded them at a measured pace, stopping when his master stopped, increasing or slackening his speed as he did, and sagaciously keeping the middle of the path, in order to preserve his precious charge from injury by contact with the rocks or brushwood.

Consuelo walked with great difficulty, and would have fallen twenty times but for Albert's arm, which every moment supported and raised her up. They once more descended together the course of the stream, keeping along its fresh and verdant margin.

"Zdenko," said Albert, "delights in tending the Naiad of these mysterious grottoes. He smooths her bed when encumbered as it often is with gravel and shells; he fosters the pale flowers which spring up beneath her footsteps, and protects them against her kisses, which are sometimes rather rude."

Consuelo looked upwards at the sky through the clefts of the rock, and saw a star glimmer in its blue vault. "That," said Albert, "is Aldebaron, the star of the Zingari. The day will not dawn for an hour yet."

"That is my star," replied Consuelo, "for I am, my dear Count, though not by race, by calling, a kind of Zingara. My mother bore no other name at Venice, though in accordance with her Spanish prejudices, she disclaimed the degrading appellation. As for myself I am still known in that country by the name of the *Zingarella*."

"Are you indeed one of that persecuted race," replied Albert; "if so, I should love you yet more than I do, were that possible."

Consuelo, who had thought it right to recall Count Rudolstadt to the disparity of their birth and condition, recollected what Amella

had said of Albert's sympathy for the wandering poor and, fearing lest she had involuntarily yielded to an instinctive feeling of coquetry, she kept silence.

But Albert thus interrupted it in a few moments:

"What you have just told me," said he, "awakens in me, I know not by what association of ideas, a recollection of my youth, childish enough it is true, but which I must relate to you: for since I have seen you, it has again and again recurred to my memory. Learn more on me, dear sister, whilst I repeat it."

"I was about fifteen, when, returning late one evening by one of the paths which border on the Schreckenstein, and which wind through the hills in the direction of the castle, I saw before me a tall thin woman, miserably clad, who carried a burthen on her shoulders, and who paused occasionally to seat herself, and to recover breath. I accosted her. She was beautiful, though embrowned by the sun and withered by misery and care. Still there was in her bearing, mean as was her attire, a sort of pride and dignity, mingled, it is true, with an air of melancholy. When she held out her hand to me, she rather commanded pity than implored it. My purse was empty. I entreated her to accompany me to the castle, where she could have help, food, and shelter for the night.

"I would prefer remaining here," replied she, with a foreign accent which I conceived to be that of the wandering Egyptians, for I was not at that time acquainted with the various languages which I afterwards learned in my travels. 'I could pay you,' she added, 'for the hospitality you offer, by singing songs of the different countries which I have traversed. I rarely ask alms unless compelled to do so by extreme distress.'

"Poor creature!" said I, 'you bear a very heavy burden; your feet are wounded and almost naked. Entrust your bundle to me; I will carry it to my abode, and you will thus be able to walk with more ease.'

"This burden daily becomes heavier," she replied, with a melancholy smile, which imparted a charm to her features, 'but I do not complain of it. I have borne it without repining for years, and over hundreds of leagues. I never trust it to any one besides myself; but you appear so good and so innocent, that I shall lend it to you until we reach your home.'

"She then unloosed the clasp of her mantle, which entirely covered her, the handle of her guitar alone being visible. This movement discovered to me a child of five or six years old, pale and weather-beaten like its mother, but with a countenance so sweet and calm that it filled my heart with tenderness. It was a little girl, quite in tatters, lean, but hale and strong, and who slept tranquilly as a slumbering cherub on the bruised and wearied back of the wandering songstress. I took her in my arms, but had some trouble in keeping her there: for, waking up and finding herself with a stranger, she struggled and wept. Her mother, to soothe her, spoke to her in her own language; my caresses and attentions comforted her, and on arriving at the castle we were the best friends in the world. When the poor woman had supped, she put her infant in a bed which I had prepared, attired herself in a strange dress, sadder still than her rags and came into the hall, where she sang Spanish, French, and German ballads, with a clearness and delicacy of voice, a firmness of intonation united to a frankness and absence of reserve in her manner

which charmed us all. My good aunt paid her every attention, which the Zingara appeared to feel; but she did not lay aside her pride, and only gave evasive answers to our questions. The child interested me even more than its mother; and I earnestly wished to see her again, to amuse her, and even to keep her altogether. I know not what tender solicitude awoke in my bosom for this little being, poor, and a wanderer on the earth. I dreamt of her all night long, and in the morning I ran to see her. But already the Zingara had departed, and I traversed the whole mountain around without being able to discover her. She had risen before the dawn, and, with her child, had taken the way towards the south, carrying with her my guitar, which I had made her a present of, her own, to her great sorrow, being broken."

"Albert! Albert!" exclaimed Consuelo, with extraordinary emotion; "that guitar is at Venice with Master Porpora, who keeps it for me, and from whom I shall reclaim it, never to part with it again. It is of ebony, with a cipher chased on silver—a cipher which I well remember, 'A. R.' My mother, whose memory was defective, from having seen so many things, neither remembered your name nor that of your castle, nor even the country where this adventure had happened; but she often spoke of the hospitality she had received from the owner of the guitar, of the touching charity of the young and handsome signor, who had carried me in his arms for half a league, chatting with her the while as with an equal. Oh, my dear Albert, all that is fresh in my memory also. At each word of your recital, these long-slumbering images were awakened one by one; and this is the reason why your mountains did not appear absolutely unknown to me, and why I endeavored in vain to discover the cause of these confused recollections which forced themselves upon me during my journey, and especially why, when I first saw you, my heart palpitated, and my head bowed down respectfully, as if I had just found a friend and protector, long lost and regretted."

"Do you think, then, Consuelo," said Albert, pressing her to his heart, "that I did not recognise you at the first glance? In vain have years changed and improved the lineaments of childhood. I have a memory wonderfully retentive, though often confused and dreamy, which needs not the aid of sight or speech to traverse the space of days and of ages. I did not know that you were my cherished Zingarella, but I felt assured I had already known you, loved you, and pressed you to my heart—a heart which, although unwittingly, was from that instant bound to yours for ever."

CHAPTER XLVI.

THUS conversing, they arrived at the point where the two paths divided, and where Consuelo had met Zdenko. They perceived at a distance the light of his lantern which was placed on the ground beside him. Consuelo having learned by experience the dangerous whims, and almost incredible strength of the idiot, involuntarily pressed close to Albert, on perceiving the indication of his approach.

"Why do you fear this mild and affectionate creature?" said the young count, surprised, yet secretly gratified at her terror. "Poor

Zdenko loves you, although since yesternight a frightful dream has made him refractory and rather hostile to your generous project of coming to seek me. But he is, when I desire it, as submissive as a child, and you shall see him at your feet if I but say the word."

"Do not humiliate him before me," replied Consuelo; "do not increase the aversion which he already entertains for me. I shall by-and-by inform you of the serious reasons I have to fear and avoid him for the future."

"Zdenko," replied Albert, "is surely an ethereal being, and it is difficult to conceive how he could inspire any one whatever with fear. His state of perpetual ecstasy confers on him the purity and charity of angels."

"But this state of ecstasy when it is prolonged becomes a disease. Do not deceive yourself on this point. God does not wish that man should thus abjure the feeling and consciousness of his real life, to elevate himself—often by vague conceptions—to an ideal world. Madness, the general result of these hallucinations, is a punishment for his pride and indolence."

Cynabre stopped when he saw Zdenko, and looked at him with an affectionate eye, expecting the customary caress, which his friend now withheld from him. His head was buried in his hands as it had been when Consuelo left him. Albert spoke to him in Bohemian, but he scarcely made any reply. His cheeks were bathed in tears, and he would not so much as look at Consuelo. But Albert raised his voice, and spoke to him firmly; but there was still more of exhortation than of anger in his tones. He rose and offered her his hand, which she took, though not without trembling.

"Now," he said to her in German, looking at her mildly, although sadly, "you ought to fear me no longer; but you have done me great injury, and I feel that your hand is full of misfortune to me."

He walked on before, now and then exchanging a word with Albert. They followed the solidly-built and spacious gallery, which hitherto Consuelo had not yet traversed, which led them to a round, vaulted hall, in which they again encountered the water of the spring, flowing into a large basin, made by the hand of man, and walled up with hewn stone. Two streams flowed from it, one losing itself in the ramifications of the cavern, the other rushing towards the castle cistern. The latter of these Zdenko closed, placing in its channel three huge blocks of stone, when desired to lower the cistern to the level of the sluiceway, and of the stairway by which to gain Albert's terrace.

"Let us sit down here awhile," said Albert, to his companion, "to give the water of the well time to run off by the waste-way——"

"Which I know but too well," said Consuelo, shuddering from head to foot.

"What do you mean?" asked Albert, in astonishment.

"I will tell you some other time," said Consuelo. "At this moment I do not wish to alarm and sadden you by the idea of the perils I have gone through."

"What does she mean?" asked Albert of Zdenko, in astonishment.

Zdenko replied in Bohemian, while he was kneading some clay wherewith to fill up the interstices of the blocks of stone.

"Explain yourself, Consuelo," said Albert, earnestly. "I cannot make out what he means. He says that he did not guide you hither, that you came through subterraneous passages, which I know to be impenetrable, and through which no delicate woman would or could

attempt to pass. He says that destiny led you, and that the Archangel Michael, whom he calls the haughty and imperious, guided you through the waters, and across the abysses."

"I dare say it was the Archangel Michael," said Consuelo, with a smile, "for it is very certain that I came by the waste-way of the fountain, and outstripped the torrent in its course. That I lost my way two or three times, passed caverns and quarries in which I expected to be smothered or drowned at every step I took; and yet all these things were less terrible to me than the rage of Zdenko, when chance or Providence brought me back to the true road."

And here Consuelo, who was still speaking Spanish to Albert, told him in a few words of the reception the pacific Zdenko had given her, and of his attempt to bury her alive, which he would unquestionably have accomplished had she not fortunately remembered the singularly heretical phrase by which to appease him. Cold sweat rolled down the face of Albert, and his eyes shot fiery glances of wrath against Zdenko, who returned them with defiance and disdain. Consuelo trembled at the idea of a conflict between these two madmen, and tried to reconcile them by gentle words, but Albert rose, and giving the keys of his hermitage to Zdenko, addressed him very coldly, when Zdenko instantly submitted, and went away, singing some of his wild and antique airs.

"Consuelo," said Albert, as soon as he was gone, "if this faithful animal now crouching at your feet, if poor Cynabre were by involuntary rage to put your life in peril, he should die for it, and my hand, which has never shed the blood even of the lower animals, would not hesitate to slay him. Fear not, then; no further peril shall assail you."

"Of what are you speaking, Albert?" she cried, alarmed at this sudden illusion. "I fear nothing; Zdenko is still a man, if he have lost his reason—in part by his own fault, and in part it may be by yours. Speak not of blood or punishment; it is for you to lead him back to truth and reason. But come, let us go. I fear that the day may dawn, and that we may be seen as we re-enter the castle."

"You are right, Consuelo," said Albert, proceeding on his way. "Wisdom speaks by thy mouth. My madness has been contagious to the poor wretch, and myself, cured by you, it is for me to cure him. But if I fail, although Zdenko be a man in the eyes of God, and an angel for his tenderness to me, although he be the only true friend on earth, be sure that I will tear him from my heart, and that you shall never see him more."

"Hold! Albert, hold!" cried Consuelo. "Dwell not on such ideas. I would rather a hundred fold myself die, than force on you a necessity so terrible."

But Albert heard her not. He was again bewildered. And as he was no longer compelled to support her, he seemed to forget her very existence, and walked rapidly forward, making the cavern re-echo with his broken exclamations, and leaving her to drag herself as best she might, behind him.

In this alarming situation Consuelo could think of nothing but Zdenko, who was behind, and might follow her, and of the torrent, which he might unchain at any moment, in which case she would perish miserably, deprived of Albert's aid. For he was now the victim of a new phantasy, and appeared to see her before him, and to be in pursuit of a fleeting phantom, while she was really behind him in

the darkness. Cynabre, who carried the light, ran as swiftly as his master walked; the light vanished behind the angles of the sinuous road, and at length, overcome with fatigue and terror, Consuelo stumbled over a fragment of rock, fell, and could not rise again.

"It is all over!" she thought within herself, after a vain effort to raise herself on her knees. "I am a victim to a pitiless destiny, and never more shall look upon the light of heaven." A thicker darkness than that of the cavern overspread her eyes. Her hands grew chill, an apathy like that of the last sleep overpowered her, when suddenly she was raised in a pair of strong arms, and pressed closely to a loving breast, while a friendly voice addressed her with kind words. Cynabre bounded before her, shaking his lantern joyously, for it was Albert, who had recovered his senses, and returned, just in time to rescue her from certain death. In three minutes they reached the cistern, into which the water was already beginning to flow. Cynabre, accustomed to the way, rushed fleetly up the steps, as if he feared to be in the way of his master, while Albert, clinging to the chain with one hand while he upheld her with the other, ascended with wonderful speed. At any time his muscular strength was ten-fold that of Zdenko, and now he was animated by an almost supernatural power. When he deposited his precious burthen on the margin of the well, the day was dawning.

"My friend," said she tenderly, "I was about to die when you saved me. You have returned all that I have done for you, but now I feel your fatigue more than you do yourself and I feel as if I should give way under it."

"Oh, my little Zingarella," cried Albert, enthusiastically, "I feel your weight as little as on that day when I bore you, yet a child, down the steep descent of the Shreckenstein into the castle."

"Whence you are never to issue more, without my permission, Albert. Remember your promise."

"I will. Do you, likewise."

He then helped her to wrap herself in her veil, and led her through his room, whence she escaped to her own apartment unseen of any one, although the people were beginning to rise in the castle, and the dry morning cough of the canoness was heard from the lower story.

Hastily she took off and concealed her garments, soiled and torn by her wild nocturnal adventures, for she had recovered strength enough to be aware of the necessity of secrecy. But no sooner had her head touched the pillow than a heavy and unrefreshing sleep fell on her, and she remained as it were nailed to her pillow by the oppression of fierce and fiery fever.

CHAPTER XLVII

THE Canoness Wenceslawa, after praying that morning about half an hour, went up-stairs, and waked straight to the door of her nephew's chamber. She was charmed to hear some slight sounds from within, which served to announce his return. She entered softly, and what was her rapture to see Albert sleeping peacefully in his own bed, and Cynabre curled up in an arm chair. At once she ran down to

the oratory, where the old Count Christian was praying, as he wont, that heaven would restore his son to him, either on earth or in heaven.

"Brother," she cried kneeling by his side, "suspend your prayer and raise your highest benedictions toward heaven. Your prayers are granted."

She had no need to utter another word. The old man understood her, raised his withered hand toward heaven, and cried in a faint voice, "My God, you have restored my son to me!"

And then both, as if by a sudden inspiration, began to recite alternately the verses of the beautiful canticle of Simeon, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace!"

Albert they determined not to awaken; but the baron, the chaplain, and all the servants were summoned, and listened devoutly to a mass of thanksgiving in the Castle chapel. Amelia alone greatly disapproved of being awakened at five o'clock in the morning, to yawn through a sleepy mass, though she was rejoiced at her cousin's return.

"Why did not your good friend, Porporina, join us in returning thanks to Providence," said Count Christian to his niece, when mass was over.

"I tried to waken her," answered Amelia, "but in vain. I called her, shook her, did all I could to arouse her, but in vain. I should have thought her dead, but she was as hot as fire, and her face was crimson. She must have slept ill, and is feverish."

"The excellent young lady must be sick, then," said Count Christian, "and, my dear sister, you ought to go and give her that care which her situation requires. I trust the happy day of our son's return will not be saddened by the illness of that noble girl."

"I will go, brother," replied the canoress, who never took a step or said a word in relation to Consuelo, without consulting the chaplain's eye. "But do not be alarmed, Christian. The signora Nina is very nervous, and will soon be well. Is it not, however, a very singular thing," said she, aside to the chaplain, when she could do so unobserved, "that this girl should have foretold Albert's return so confidently and so surely. Perhaps we may have deceived ourselves about her, and she may be a sort of saint."

"A saint would have come to mass, instead of having a fever at such a time," said the chaplain, gravely.

This judicious remark drew a sigh from the canoress; but she went to see Consuelo, and found her in a burning fever and heavy lethargic sleep. The chaplain was summoned, and declared that, should this condition last, she would be very ill. The young baroness was next questioned as to whether her neighbor had passed a restless night.

"Far from it," said Amelia, "I never heard her move. I expected, after the predictions and strange tales with which she has been regaling us of late, to have heard the sabbat danced in her room; but whether the devil carried her far hence, or whether she deals with very clever imps I know not; she never stirred to my knowledge, for my sleep was not once broken."

The chaplain thought these jests very wicked, and the canoress whose good heart ever counteracted the errors of her judgment, thought them very much misplaced by the bedside of a sick companion. She said nothing, however, attributing her niece's spite to well-founded jealousy, and only asked the chaplain what medicine ought to be given to Porporina.

ordered a sedative, but, as her teeth were hard clenched it could not be administered, and this he pronounced a bad sign. But in that state of apathy was contagious, and he put off his judgment until after a future examination, saying "If this state continues, we must think of sending for a physician; for I should not feel justified in undertaking a case where the ailment is not moral. In the meantime I will pray for her, and it may be, to judge from her recent state of mind, that the aid of God will be most effective in her case."

A servant maid was left with Consuelo. The canoness went to prepare a dainty breakfast for Albert; Amelia put on a brilliant costume to captivate him. Every one prepared some gratification for the young count, while no one thought of poor Consuelo, to whom his return was due.

Albert soon awoke, and, instead of making useless efforts to remember what had passed, as he usually did after his fits of delirium and visits to the cavern, he speedily remembered his love and the happiness which he had derived from Consuelo. He hastened to arise, dressed and perfumed himself, and hastened to throw himself into the arms of his father and his aunt, whose joy was at its height when they observed that Albert was perfectly sensible, conscious of his long absence, and penitent for the uneasiness he had caused them. He begged their pardon earnestly, and promised to give them no cause for further annoyance. He saw their delight at his return to a perception of reality, but, at the same time, he remarked that they persisted in flattering him as to his true position, and he felt humiliated at being treated as a child, when he knew himself again a man.

When they sat down to table, in the midst of the caresses of his family and their tears of joy, he looked anxiously around for her who was become necessary to his happiness and peace, so that his aunt, seeing him start at the opening of every door, thought it best to relieve his anxiety by stating that their young guest had slept badly, and wished to remain in bed part of the day.

Albert well understood that his deliverer must naturally be much fatigued; nevertheless, fear was manifest in all his features at this news.

"But, aunt," said he, at length, unable to control his emotion, "I think if Porpora's adopted daughter be seriously ill, we might be better employed than sitting here round the table, eating and drinking and chatting at our ease."

"Don't be alarmed, Albert," said Amelia, blushing with spite, "Nina is busy dreaming about you, and auguring your return, which she awaits in tranquil sleep, while we are joyously celebrating it here."

Albert turned pale with indignation, and replied with an angry glance—

"If any one here has slept while awaiting me, it is not the person whom you have named that deserves thanks for it. The rosiness of your cheeks, fair cousin, shows that you have not lost a moment's sleep in my absence, and therefore now require no rest. I thank you for it with all my heart, for it would have been very painful to me to beg your pardon with shame and penitence, as I have done of all the rest of the family."

"Thanks for the exception," answered Amelia, crimson with rage, "I will try always to deserve it, by keeping my watchings and anxieties for some one who will care for them—not turn them into jest."

This little altercation, which was no new affair between Albert his betrothed, though it was unusually bitter, in despite of all Albert's efforts to the contrary, threw some constraint and sadness over the rest of the morning. The canoness went several times to see her patient, whom she found still more feverish and more lethargic. Amelia, who regarded Albert's anxiety as a personal insult, went to cry in her own room. The chaplain told the canoness that if the fever lasted until evening, they must send for a physician. Count Christian, who could not comprehend his son's anxiety, and who thought him still in ill health, kept his son close to his side all the morning. But in spite of his efforts to soothe him by affectionate words, the old man could not hit upon a single topic by which he could awaken Albert's sympathies, fearing to sound the depths of his mind, through a vague apprehension of being overcome in argument, which had always befallen him, whenever, wanting as he was both in eloquence and that logical art of special pleading which supplies the want of it, he had attempted to attack what he called the heresies of Albert, and to combat the vivid gleams which pierced through the gloom of his insane fits, with the feeble and modest arguments of a weak and narrow-minded, though sincere Catholic. And he even dreaded, lest by giving him the victory, he should but add to his pride and attachment in the wrong, and so do him injury rather than good. Their conversation was, therefore, broken, at least twenty times, by a sort of mutual alarm, and twenty times resumed with constraint on both sides, and, at last, sunk of itself into silence. The old count feil asleep in his own arm-chair, and Albert went to inquire after Consuelo's health, concerning whom he was the more alarmed, the more they endeavored to conceal from him her ailment.

He passed two hours and upwards roaming about the corridors of the castle, lying in wait for the canoness or the chaplain, in hopes of gaining tidings from them. The chaplain persisted in answering him concisely and reservedly; the canoness put on a forced smile when she saw him, and affected to talk of other things, as if to lull him into a false security. But it was not long before Albert perceived that she was really uneasy, that her visits to Consuelo's chamber became much more frequent, and that she did not hesitate about opening and shutting the doors constantly, as if the sleep, which they pretended to be so peaceful and necessary, was one which could not be interrupted by any noise or uproar. He took courage, therefore, to approach the room, to enter which he would almost have given his life. It had an antechamber, separated from the passage by two massive doors, in which there was no chink or cranny penetrable to the eye. So soon as she observed this attempt, the canoness bolted both these securely, and thereafter, visited her patient only through Amelia's room, which was adjoining, and which she well knew Albert would not visit in order to seek tidings, save with the last reluctance. At length, seeing that he was growing angry, she resolved to deceive him; and, while asking pardon of the Lord in her heart, announced that the invalid was much better, and would come down to dinner with the family.

Albert, in the meantime, returned to his father, anxiously awaiting the hour which should give him back happiness and Consuelo.

But the bell rang in vain; no Consuelo made her appearance, and the canoness, who seemed to become rapidly an adept in the art of falsehood, said that she had risen, but feeling herself still weak, had preferred to take her dinner in her own room; and she even carried the

deceit so far as to send delicate dishes to her from the table. These stratagems at last convinced Albert, though he still felt an invincible presentiment of evil, and only preserved the appearance of calmness by the exertion of a powerful effort.

In the evening, Wenceslawa again announced, with an air of satisfaction, that the Porporina was much better, that the feverish redness of her complexion had subsided, that her pulse was rather feeble than full, and that she would undoubtedly pass an excellent night.

"And, wherefore," muttered Albert to himself, "am I frozen with terror, in spite of this favorable news?"

In truth, the good canoness, who, despite her leanness and deformity, had never been sick an hour in her life, understood nothing of the sickness of others. When she saw Consuelo's flushed cheek alter to a pale bluish hue, her agitated blood become stagnant in her veins, and her oppressed bosom cease to labor; she really believed that she was convalescent, and gave notice of the occurrence with childish gladness. But the chaplain, who knew a little more, saw at once that this apparent ease was but the precursor of a violent crisis. So soon as Albert had retired, he told the canoness that the moment had arrived when the physician must be summoned. Unfortunately the town was distant, the night dark, the roads execrably bad, and Hans, the messenger, though zealous enough, as slow as the horse that carried him. The storm arose, the rain fell in torrents. The old horse, which carried the old servant, tripped a hundred times, and, at length, lost his way with his master, who took every hill for the Schreckenstein, and every flash of lightning for the fiery flight of an evil spirit. It was broad day before he recovered his way, and it was late before the physician could be aroused, induced to dress himself, and proceed on his way. More than four-and-twenty hours had been lost in determining and performing this.

Meanwhile, Albert vainly endeavored to sleep. His evil auguries and the wild sounds of the distant storm, kept him awake all night long. He dared not go down stairs, fearing the offended dignity of his aunt, and her remarks on the impropriety of his visit to the chamber of two young ladies. He left his door open, however, and listened to the footsteps as they passed to and fro, on the lower floor. Hearing nothing of moment, he was compelled to be calm, and in obedience to Consuelo's orders, he watched over his reason and his moral health, with firmness and patience. But, on a sudden, above the peals of thunder and the crashing of the timbers of the old castle under the fury of the hurricane, a long and piercing cry reached his ear, like the thrust of a keen weapon. Albert, who had lain down on the bed in his clothes, with a full resolution of sleeping, sprang to his feet, rushed down stairs, and knocked at Consuelo's door. All was again silence. No one replied or came to open the door. Albert almost fancied he had been dreaming, when another cry followed, yet wilder than the first. He hesitated no longer, ran round a gloomy corridor, arrived at Amelia's door, and announced his name. He heard her bolt it from within, and her voice imperiously commanded him to begone. Nevertheless, the cries and groans redoubled. It was the voice of Consuelo in the extremity of suffering. He even heard his own name uttered in tones of anguish by that adored mouth. He drove the door in furiously, making both lock and bolt fly, and casting Amelia, who, in a damask dressing-gown and lace cap, played the part of injured modesty violently back

on the sofa, rushed into Consuelo's apartment, pale as a spectre, and with his hair bristling erect on his head.

CHAPTER XLVIII

CONSUELO, who was now violently delirious, was struggling furiously in the arms of the two strongest maid-servants in the house. Assailed, as is usually the case in all affections of the brain, by appalling terrors, the poor girl was endeavoring to escape from the visions which beset her. She could see only in the persons who were trying to restrain and reassure her, enemies and monsters. The chaplain, terror-stricken and expecting to see her fall at each moment, overpowered by the violence of her fit, could only pray for her, while she took him for Zdenko, building the wall against her in the cavern. The trembling canoness who was assisting the other women to hold her in bed, she took for the phantom of the two Wandas, the sisters of Ziska, and the mother of Albert, confronting her, one by one in the cavern, and accusing her of invading their demesnes. Her cries, her groans, her words, all incomprehensible to the bystanders, all related to the events of the past night. She heard the roar of the torrents, and moved her arms as if she would have swam. She shook her black hair, dishevelled from her shoulders, and thought she saw the foam-flakes fall from it. Ever she fancied Zdenko behind her, opening the sluice-gates, or before her, blocking her way with granite. She only spoke of water and of stones, and that with a pertinacity that led the chaplain to say—"This is a very long and painful dream. I cannot conceive what has so rivetted her thoughts on that cistern. It is evidently the beginning of her fever, and her delirium refers to nothing else."

At the moment when Albert entered her chamber in dismay, Consuelo, exhausted with the violence of her delirium, was uttering only inarticulate words and piercing cries. The power of her will, no longer resisted her terrors, as it had done when she encountered them, and the reaction which she now experienced was intensely horrible. She recovered her voice, however, by a sort of instinct predominant over her delirium, and began to call Albert, with shrieks so wild and piercing, that the whole house rang.

"Here—I am here!" he cried, rushing towards the bed. Consuelo heard him—recovered all her energies, and fancying that he was flying from her, darted out of bed, escaping the hands of her attendants, with that rapidity of motion and muscular power, which fever often lends even to the weakest frames. She sprang into the middle of the room with dishevelled hair and bare feet, and her body covered only by a slight, and ruffled night-dress, looking almost like a spectre, just issued from the tomb. At the very moment when they were on the point of seizing her, she sprang with a light bound to the top of the harpsichord, and thence to the sill of the window, which she evidently took for the opening of the fatal cistern; and calling again on the name of Albert through the wild and stormy night, would have cast herself out headlong, had not Albert, yet more active and far stronger than she, caught her in his arms, and carried her back to her bed.

She did not recognise him, but she made no resistance and ceased to cry. He addressed her in Spanish, lavishing on her the tenderest names and epithets. She listened, but appeared neither to hear or see him; but suddenly rising on her knees in bed, she began to sing Handel's *Te Deum*, which she had recently read and admired. Never had she looked more lovely than in that attitude of ecstasy, with her hair loosely flowing, her cheeks flushed with fever, and her eyes turned heavenward, and conscious of heaven only. The canoness was so much moved that she sank on her knees at the foot of the bed, and burst into tears; and the chaplain, unsympathetic as he was, bowed his head in religious veneration. As soon as she had ended her chant, she heaved a deep sigh, and exclaiming—"I am saved," fell backward, pale as marble, with her eyes wide open, but devoid of life or lustre, her lips ashy white, and her arms rigid.

An instant of terror and silence followed the catastrophe. Amelia who had watched this terrible scene motionless at the door of her own room, without daring to move a step, fell backward fainting. The canoness and the two women ran to succor her, while Consuelo lay cold and motionless on the arm of Albert, who had let fall his head upon her bosom, and seemed scarce more alive than she. The canoness had no sooner laid Amelia on the bed, than she returned to the door of Consuelo's room.

"Well, Monsieur Chaplain?" she asked mournfully.

"Madam, it is death!" replied the chaplain in a deep voice, letting fall Consuelo's arm, the pulse of which he had been questioning.

"No, it is not death," cried Albert impetuously. "I tell you it is not death. I have consulted her heart better than you have her pulse. It beats still; she breathes, she is alive. Oh! she will live. It is not thus, nor is it now that she is to pass away. Now is the moment to act with energy. Now, Monsieur Chaplain, give me your medicine chest; I know how to treat her, which you do not. Wretch that you are, obey me. You have done her no good. You might have prevented this fearful crisis; you have not done so. You hid her illness from me. You have all deceived me. Did you then wish to destroy her? Your cowardly prudence, your stupid apathy, have tied up both your tongue and your hands. Give me your medicine chest, I say, and let me act."

And as the chaplain still hesitated to give his medicines, which might easily, in the hands of one inexperienced, much more of one half-mad, be considered poisons, he snatched it violently out of his hands. Without paying any regard to his aunt's observations, he chose out and weighed himself, the powerful sedatives, which could alone act in such a crisis. Albert was learned in many things, of which no one believed that he knew anything. He had experimented upon himself at one period of his life, when he was himself attending to the disordered functions of his own brain, and had studied the effect of the most potent anti-spasmodics. Prompt of judgment, bold and zealous, he administered a dose which the chaplain would not have ventured to recommend. With great gentleness he succeeded in opening her clenched teeth, and got her to swallow some drops of the efficacious medicine. At the end of an hour, during which he repeated the practice several times, her breathing was free, her hands had recovered their warmth, and her features their elasticity. She neither saw nor heard anything as yet, but her lethargy had assumed the form of sleep and a pale color was returning to her lips. The physician arrived, and

seeing that the case was a serious one, declared that he had been called too late, and would answer for nothing. She ought to have been bled last night," he said, "but now the moment was not favorable. To bleed would bring back the crisis, and this would be embarrassing."

"It *will* bring it back," said Albert, "and yet she must be bled."

The German physician, who was a heavy person, accustomed to be regarded as an oracle in his part of the country, where he had no rival or competitor, raised his bushy eyes, and looked frowningly to see who dared question his diction.

"I tell you she must be bled," said Albert, authoritatively. "The crisis will return with or without the bleeding."

"Permit me," said the doctor; "that is less certain than you seem to think."

"If the crisis do not return all is lost," replied Albert, "and you ought to know it. This lethargic state tends to congestion of the brain, paralysis, and death. It is your duty to possess yourself of the disease, to rekindle its intensity, and then combat it, and subdue it. What can you do beside here? Prayers and funeral ceremonies are not your duty. Bleed her, or I will do so myself."

The doctor knew well that Albert's reasoning was just, but it was not his rule that a man so grave and important as he, should decide promptly. Moreover, our German had a habit of pretending perplexities, in order to come out of them triumphantly, as if by a sudden flash of genius, so as to lead persons to speak of him as a very great and skilful practitioner, without his equal, even in Vienna.

When he found himself contradicted, therefore, and driven to the wall by Albert's impatience—"If you are a physician," he replied, "and if you have authority here, I do not see why I was called in, and I shall go home."

"If you don't chose to decide while there is yet time, you may do so," returned Albert.

Doctor Wetzeliuss, who was desperately offended at being associated with an unknown brother of the profession, rose, and went into Amelia's room, to attend to the nerves of that young person, who was urgently solicitous to see him, and to take leave of the canoness; but she insisted on his remaining.

"Alas! my dear doctor," said she, "you cannot abandon us in such a situation. See what heavy responsibility weighs on us. My nephew has offended you, but you should not resist so seriously the hastiness of a young man who is so little master of himself."

"Was that Count Albert?" asked the doctor, amazed. "I should never have recognised him, he is so much altered."

"Without doubt, the ten years which have elapsed since you saw him, have made a great change in him."

"I thought him completely cured," said the doctor, maliciously; "for I have not been sent for once since his return."

"Ah! my dear doctor, you are aware that Albert never willingly submitted to the decision of science."

"And now he appears to be a physician himself!"

"He has a slight knowledge of all sciences, but he carries into all his uncontrollable impatience. The frightful state in which he has just seen this young girl has agitated him terribly, otherwise you would have seen him more polite, more calm, and grateful to you for the care you bestowed on him in his infancy."

"I think he requires care more than ever," replied the doctor, who in spite of his respect for the Rudolstadt family, preferred afflicting the canoness by this harsh observation, to stooping from his professional position, and giving up the petty revenge of treating Albert as a madman.

The canoness suffered the more from this cruelty, that the exasperation of the doctor might lead him to reveal the condition of her nephew, which she took such pains to conceal. She therefore laid aside her dignity for the moment to disarm this resentment, and deferentially inquired what he thought of the bleeding so much insisted on by Albert.

"I think it is absurd at present," said the doctor, who wished to maintain the initiative, and allow the decision to come perfectly free from his respected lips. "I shall wait an hour or two; and if the right moment should arrive sooner than I expect, I shall act: but in the present crisis, the state of the pulse does not warrant me taking any decisive step."

"Then you will remain with us? Bless you, excellent doctor!"

"When I am now aware that my opponent is the young count," replied the doctor, smiling with a patronising and compassionate air, "I shall not be astonished at anything, and shall allow him to talk as he pleases."

And he was turning to re-enter Consuelo's apartment, the door of which the chaplain had closed to prevent Albert hearing this colloquy, when the chaplain himself, pale and bewildered, left the sick girl's couch, and came to seek the physician.

"In the name of Heaven! doctor!" he exclaimed, "come and use your authority, for mine is despised, as the voice of God himself would be, I believe, by Count Albert. He persists in bleeding the dying girl, contrary to your express prohibition. I know not by what force or stratagem we shall prevent him. He will maim her, if he do not kill her on the spot, by some untimely blunder."

"So, so," muttered the doctor in a sulky tone, as he stalked leisurely towards the door, with the conceited and insulting air of a man devoid of natural feeling, "we shall see fine doings if I fail in diverting his attention in some way."

But when they approached the bed, they found Albert with his reddened lancet between his teeth: with one hand he supported Consuelo's arm, while with the other he held the bar. The vein was open, and dark-colored blood flowed in an abundant stream.

The chaplain began to murmur, to exclaim, and to take Heaven to witness. The doctor endeavored to jest a little, to distract Albert's thoughts, conceiving he might take his own time to close the vein, were it only to open it a moment after, that his caprice and vanity might thus enjoy all the credit of success. But Albert kept them all at a distance by a mere glance; and as soon as he had drawn a sufficient quantity of blood, he applied the necessary bandages, with the dexterity of an experienced operator. He then gently replaced Consuelo's arm by her side, handing the canoness a phial to hold to her nostrils, and called the chaplain and the doctor into Amelia's chamber.

"Gentlemen," said he, "you can now be of no further use. Indecision and prejudice united, paralyze your zeal and your knowledge. I here declare that I take all the responsibility on myself, and that I will not be either opposed or molested in so serious a task. I beg there-

fore that the chaplain may recite his prayers and the doctor administer his potions to my cousin. I shall suffer no prognostics, nor sentences of death around the bed of one who will soon regain her consciousness. Let this be settled. If in this instance I offend a learned man—if I am guilty of culpable conduct towards a friend—I shall ask pardon when I can once more think of myself."

After having thus spoken in a tone, the serious and studied politeness of which was in strong contrast with the coidness and formality of his words, Albert re-entered Consuelo's apartment, closed the door, put the key in his pocket, and said to the canoness: "No one shall either enter or leave this room without my permission."

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE terrified canoness dared not venture a word in reply. There was something so resolute in Albert's air and demeanor that his good aunt quailed before it, and obeyed him with an alacrity quite surprising in her. The physician finding his authority despised, and not caring, as he afterwards affirmed, to encounter a madman, wisely determined to withdraw. The chaplain betook himself to his prayers, and Albert, assisted by his aunt and two of the domestics, remained the whole day with his patient, without relaxing his attentions for an instant. After some hours of quiet the paroxysm returned with an intensity almost greater than that of the preceding night. It was however of shorter duration, and then it yielded to the effect of powerful remedies. Albert desired the canoness to retire to rest, and to send him another female domestic to assist him while the two others took some repose.

"Will you not also take some rest?" asked Wenceslawa, trembling.

"No, my dear aunt," he replied, "I require none."

"Alas! my child," said she, "you will kill yourself, then;" and she added as she left the room, emboldened by the abstraction of the count, "This stranger costs us dear."

He consented however to take some food, in order to keep up his strength. He ate standing in the corridor, his eye fixed upon the door; and as soon as he had finished his hasty repast, he threw down the napkin, and re-entered the room. He had closed the communication between the chamber of Consuelo and that of Amelia, and only allowed the attendants to gain access by the gallery. Amelia wished to be admitted to tend her suffering companion; but she went so awkwardly about it, and, dreading the return of convulsions, displayed such terror at every feverish movement, that Albert became irritated, and begged her not to trouble herself further, but retire to her own apartment.

"To my apartment!" exclaimed Amelia; "impossible!—do you imagine I could sleep with those frightful cries of agony ringing in my ears?"

Albert shrugged his shoulders, and replied that there were many other apartments in the castle, of which she might select the best,

until the invalid could be removed to one where her proximity should annoy no one.

Amelia, irritated and displeased, followed the advice. To witness the delicate care which Albert displayed towards her rival was more painful than all. "O, aunt!" she exclaimed, throwing herself into the arms of the canoness, when the latter had brought her to sleep in her own bedroom, where she had a bed prepared for her beside her own, "we did not know Albert. He now shows how he can love."

For many days Consuelo hovered between life and death; but Albert combated her malady with such perseverance and skill as finally to conquer it. He bore her through this rude trial in safety; and as soon as she was out of danger, he caused her to be removed to an apartment in the turret of the castle, where the sun shone for the longest time, and where the view was more extensive and varied than from any of the other windows. This chamber, furnished after an antique fashion, was more in unison with the serious tastes of Consuelo than the one they had first prepared for her, and she had long evinced a desire to occupy it. Here she was free from the importunities of her companion, and in spite of the continual presence of a nurse, who was engaged each morning and evening, she could enjoy the hours of convalescence agreeably with her preserver. They always conversed in Spanish, and the tender and delicate manifestation of Albert's love was so much the sweeter to Consuelo in that language which recalled her country, her childhood, and her mother. Imbued with the liveliest gratitude, weakened by sufferings in which Albert alone had effectively aided and consoled her, she submitted to that gentle lassitude which is the result of severe indisposition. Her recollections of the past returned by degrees, but not with equal distinctness. For example, if she recalled with undisguised satisfaction the support and devotion of Albert, during the principal events of their acquaintance, she saw his mental estrangement, and his somewhat gloomy passion, as through a thick cloud. There were even hours, during the half consciousness of sleep, or after composing draughts, when she imagined that she had dreamed many of the things that could give cause for distrust or fear of her generous friend. She was so much accustomed to his presence and his attentions, that if he absented himself at prayers or at meals, she felt nervous and agitated until his return. She fancied that her medicines, when prepared and administered by any other hand than his, had an effect the contrary of that which was intended. She would then observe with a tranquil smile, so affecting on a lovely countenance half veiled by the shadow of death: "I now believe, Albert, that you are an enchanter; for if you order but a single drop of water, it produces in me the same salutary calmness and strength which exists in yourself."

Albert was happy for the first time in his life; and as if his soul was strong in joy as it had been in grief, he deemed himself, at this period of intoxicating delight, the most fortunate man on earth. This chamber where he constantly saw his beloved one had become his world. At night, after he was supposed to have retired, and every one was thought asleep in the house, he returned with stealthy steps; and while the nurse in charge slept soundly, he glided behind the bed of his dear Consuelo, and watched her sleeping, pale and drooping like a flower after the storm. He settled himself in an arm-chair, which he took care to leave there when he went away, and thus passed the

night, sleeping so lightly that at the least movement of Consuelo, he awoke and bent towards her to catch her faint words; or his ready hand received hers when a prey to some unhappy dream, she was restless and disquieted. If the nurse chanced to awake, Albert declared he had just come in, and she rested satisfied that he merely visited his patient once or twice during the night, while in reality he did not waste half an hour in his own chamber. Consuelo shared this feeling, and although discovering the presence of her guardian much more frequently than that of the nurse, she was still so weak as to be easily deceived both as to the number and duration of his visits. Often when, after midnight, she found him watching over her, and besought him to retire and take a few hours repose, he would evade her desire by saying that it was now near daybreak, and that he had just risen. These innocent deceptions excited no suspicion in the mind of Consuelo of the fatigue to which her lover was subjecting himself; and to them it was owing that she seldom suffered from the absence of Albert. This fatigue, strange as it may appear, was unperceived by the young count himself: so true is it that love imparts strength to the weakest. He possessed, however, a powerful organization: and he was animated besides by a love as ardent and devoted as ever fired a human breast.

When, during the first warm rays of the sun, Consuelo was able to bear removal to the half-open window, Albert seated himself behind her, and sought in the course of the clouds and in the purple tints of the sunbeams, to divine the thoughts with which the aspect of the skies inspired his silent friend. Sometimes he silently took a corner of the veil with which she covered her head, and which a warm wind floated over the back of the sofa, and bending forward his forehead as if to rest, pressed it to his lips. One day Consuelo, drawing it forward to cover her chest, was surprised to find it warm and moist and turning more quickly than she had done since her illness, perceived some extraordinary emotion on the countenance of her friend. His cheeks were flushed, a feverish fire shone in his eyes, while his breast heaved with violent palpitations. Albert quickly recovered himself, but not before he had perceived terror depicted on the countenance of Consuelo. This deeply afflicted him. He would rather have witnessed there an emotion of contempt, or even of severity, than a lingering feeling of fear and distrust. He resolved to keep so careful a watch over himself, that no trace of his aberration of mind should be visible to her who had cured him of it, almost at the price of her own life.

He succeeded, thanks to a superhuman power, and one which no ordinary man could have exercised. Accustomed to repress his emotions, and to enjoy the full scope of his desires, when not incapacitated by his mysterious disease, he restrained himself to an extent that he did not get credit for. His friends were ignorant of the frequency and force of the attack which he had every day to overcome, until overwhelmed by despair, he fled to his secret cavern—a conqueror even in defeat, since he still maintained sufficient circumspection to hide from all eyes the spectacle of his fall. Albert's madness was of the most unhappy yet elevated stamp. He knew his madness and felt its approach until it had completely laid hold of and overpowered him. Yet he preserved in the midst of his attacks the vague and confused remembrance of an external world, in which he did not wish to reappear, whilst he felt his relations with it not per-

fectly established. This memory of an actual and real life we all retain, when, in the dreams of a painful sleep, we are transported into another life—a life of fiction and indefinable visions. We occasionally struggle against those fantasies and terrors of the night, assuring ourselves that they are merely the effects of nightmare, and making efforts to awake; but on such occasions a hostile power appears to seize upon us at every effort, and to plunge us again into a horrible lethargy, where terrible spectacles, ever growing more gloomy, close around us, and where griefs the most poignant assail and torture us.

It was in a strange series of alternations that the powerful yet miserable existence of this singular man, whom nothing but an active, delicate and intelligent tenderness could rescue from his own sufferings, was spent. Consuelo had in reality the candid and innocent soul which seemed particularly adapted for the management of his dark spirit, which had hitherto been closed against any possible approach of sympathy. There was something especially soft and touching in the romantic enthusiasm of her first solicitude for Albert, as well as in the respectful friendship with which subsequent gratitude inspired her, that really appeared intended by a special Providence for the care of Albert. It is very probable that, if forgetful of the past, Consuelo could have returned the ardor of his passion; transports so new to his experience, and a joy so sudden, would have excited him fatally. But her calm and discreet friendship had a far surer and more beneficial effect on him. It was a restraint, while it was a blessing; and if he enjoyed the pleasure of being loved as he never had been loved before, he was yet grieved at not being loved as he desired to be loved; and he had a secret fear of losing even that which he now possessed, should he appear to be dissatisfied with it. The effect of this triple love was to leave no room in his mind any longer for the indulgence of those fatal reveries to which his lonely and inactive life had naturally led him. He was delivered from these as if by the force of enchantment; for he forgot them altogether, and the image of her whom he loved, kept them aloof like a heavenly buckler outstretched between them and him. Like the fabulous hero of antiquity, Consuelo had descended into Tartarus to rescue her friend, and had brought back thence bewilderment and terror. In his turn, it became his duty to deliver her from the hateful guests who had followed her, and he had succeeded in doing so by delicate attentions and respectful cares. They thus were recommencing as it were a new life altogether, resting for support, one on the other, scarcely daring to look backward, and lacking the courage to revisit, even in thought, the abyss which they had traversed. The future was a new abyss, not less mysterious and terrible, which they did not venture to fathom. But they calmly enjoyed the present, like a season of grace which was granted them by Heaven.

CHAPTER L.

It can by no means be asserted that the other inhabitants of the family were as well at ease as they. Amelia was furious, and deigned not to pay the shortest visit to the invalid. She affected even to avoid speaking to Albert, never looked at him, and would not even

reply to his morning and evening greeting. And what annoyed her the most was, that Albert did not appear so much as to notice her spite.

The canoness, now that she saw the very evident passion of the nephew for the *adventuress*, had no longer a moment's peace of mind. She was even mentally laboring how she might avert the scandal; and, to this end, held long and frequent conferences with the chaplain.

But that holy man was by no means inclined to bring these proceedings to a close. He had been for a long time a very unimportant person, quite overlooked among the cares of the family; and he was now recovering a sort of importance among these new agitations. He had the pleasure of playing the spy, of revealing, informing, predicting, advising, of stirring in a word at his own pleasure, all the interests of the house, while affecting to meddle with none of them, and covering himself from the indignation of the young count behind the petticoats of the aged aunt.

But, these two every day discovered new causes for alarm, new motives for precaution, but never any means of safety. Every day, the good Wenceslawa approached her nephew with a resolve to come to a full explanation, but every day a sarcastic smile, or an icy look, checked the abortive effort. Hourly, she watched an opportunity for gliding into Consuelo's room and administering a severe reproof; but at every attempt, Albert, as if informed by a familiar demon, met her on the threshold, and with a single frown, like that of Olympian Jove, lowered the courage and abashed the wrath of the powers adverse to his Iliou.

The canoness, however, had twice or thrice began a conversation with the invalid; and at the moment in which she could talk with her alone, she made the best of her time by addressing a great number of very trite remarks to her which she thought vastly significant. But as Consuelo had no such ambition as she was supposed to entertain, it was all thrown away upon her. Her surprise, and her air of candor and astonishment, at once disarmed the good canoness, who never in her life had been able to resist a frank accent, or a cordial caress.

She retreated, therefore, in confusion, to confess her defeat to the chaplain, and the rest of the day was passed in resolutions for the morrow.

Nevertheless, Albert, who clearly saw what was in process, and observing that Consuelo was beginning to suspect something, and to grow uneasy, determined to put an end to the annoyance. He watched Wenceslawa, therefore, in the passage, one morning, when she thought to out-general him by a very early visit to Consuelo, and showing himself suddenly, just as she was turning the key in the lock of the invalid's door.

"My good aunt," said he, taking possession of that hand, and raising it to his lips, "I have something to say to you very low, which greatly interests you. It is that the life and health of the person who is sleeping here, are dearer to me than my own happiness. I know that your confessor holds it a point of conscience to prevent my devotion to her, and to destroy the effects of my cares. Had it not been for that, your noble heart would never have let you dream of jeopardizing the recovery of an invalid, scarce yet out of danger, by harsh words or reproaches. But, since the fanaticism and petty mind of a

priest can work such a prodigy as to change the sincerest piety and purest charity into horrid cruelty, I shall oppose to the extent of my power the crime of which my poor aunt allows herself to be made the instrument, I will guard the invalid night and day, I will not quit her for a moment; and, if in spite of my vigilance, she be torn from me, I swear by all that is most solemn in heaven, I will leave the house of my fathers, never to return. I think, when you tell my resolve to the chaplain, he will cease annoying you, and endeavoring to prevent the kindly instinct of your maternal heart."

The amazed canoness could only reply to this discourse by melting into tears.

Albert had led her to the end of the gallery, so that the explanation could not be heard by Consuelo. She complained of the threatening tone which Albert employed, and endeavored to profit by the occasion, to show him the folly of his attachment towards a person of such low birth as Nina.

"Aunt," replied Albert, smiling, "you forgot that if we are of the royal blood of the Podiebrads, our ancestors were kings only through favor of the peasants and revolted soldiery. A Podiebrad, therefore, should not pride himself on his noble origin, but rather regard it as an additional motive to attach him to the weak and the poor, since it is among them that his strength and power have planted their roots, and not so long ago that he can have forgotten it."

The canoness closed the conference by retiring to consult the chaplain.

When Wenceslawa related this conference to the chaplain, he gave it as his opinion that it would not be prudent to exasperate the young count by remonstrances, nor drive him to extremity by annoying his protégé—

"For," said he, "it may occasion a return of his malady." After a pause, he resumed.

"It is to Count Christian himself that you must address your representations," said he. "Your excessive delicacy has too much emboldened the son. Let your wise remonstrances at length awaken the disquietude of his father, that he may take decisive measures with respect to this dangerous person."

"Do you suppose," replied the canoness, "that I have not already done so? But alas! my brother has grown fifteen years older during the fifteen days of Albert's last disappearance. His mind is so enfeebled that it is no longer possible to make him understand any suggestion. He appears to indulge in a sort of passive resistance to the idea of a new calamity of this description, and rejoices like a child at having found his son, and at hearing him reason and conduct himself as an intelligent man. He believes him cured of his malady and does not perceive that poor Albert is a prey to a new kind of madness, more fatal than the first. My brother's security in this respect is so great, and he enjoys it so unaffectedly, that I have not yet found courage to open his eyes completely as to what is passing around him. It seems to me that this disclosure coming from you, and accompanied with your religious exhortations, would be listened to with more resignation, have a better effect, and be less painful to all parties."

"It is too delicate an affair," replied the chaplain, "to be undertaken by a poor priest like me. It will come much better from a sister, and your highness can soften the bitterness of the event, by expressions of tenderness which I could not venture upon towards the august head of the Rudolstadt family."

These two grave personages lost many days in deciding upon which should bell the cat. During this period of irresolution and apathy, in which habit also had its share, love made rapid progress in the heart of Albert. Consuelo's health was visibly restored, and nothing occurred to disturb the progress of an intimacy which the watchfulness of Argus could not have rendered more chaste and reserved, than it was simply through true modesty and sincere love.

Meantime the Baroness Amelia, unable to support her humiliation, earnestly entreated her father to take her back to Prague. Baron Frederick, who preferred a life in the forest to an abode in the city, promised everything that she wished, but put off from day to day the announcement and preparations for departure.—The baroness saw that it was necessary to urge matters on to suit her purpose, and devised one of those ingenious expedients in which her sex are never wanting. She had an understanding with her waiting-maid—a sharp-witted and active young Frenchwoman—and one morning, just as her father was about to set out for the chase, she begged him to accompany her in a carriage to the house of a lady of their acquaintance, to whom she had for a long time owed a visit. The baron had some difficulty in giving up his gun and his powder-horn to change his dress and the employment of the day, but he flattered himself that this condescension would render Amelia less exacting, and that the amusement of the drive would dissipate her ill-humor, and enable her to pass a few more days at the Castle of the Giants without murmuring. When the good man had gained a respite of a week, he fancied he had secured the independence of his life; his forethought extended no further. He therefore resigned himself to the necessity of sending Sapphire and Panther to the kennel, Attila, the hawk, turned upon its perch with a discontented and mutinous air, which forced a heavy sigh from its master.

The baron at last seated himself in the carriage with his daughter, and in three revolutions of the wheel was fast asleep. The coachman then received orders from Amelia to drive to the nearest post-house. They arrived there after two hours of a rapid journey; and when the baron opened his eyes, he found post-horses in his carriage, and everything ready to set out on the road to Prague.

“What means this?” exclaimed the baron; “where are we, and whither are we going? Amelia, my dear child, what folly is this? what is the meaning of this caprice, or rather this pleasantry with which you amuse yourself?”

To all her father's questions the young baroness only replied with repeated bursts of laughter, and by childish caresses. At length, when she saw the postillion mounted, and the carriage roll lightly along the highway, she assumed a serious air, and in a very decided tone spoke as follows: “My dear papa, do not be uneasy; all our luggage is carefully packed. The carriage trunks are filled with all that is necessary for our journey. There is nothing left at the Castle of the Giants except your dogs and guns, which will be of no use at Prague; and besides, you can have them whenever you wish to send for them. A letter will be handed to uncle Christian at breakfast, which is so expressed as to make him see the necessity of our departure, without unnecessarily grieving him, or making him angry either with you or me. I must now humbly beg your pardon for having deceived you, but it is nearly a month since you consented to what I at this moment execute. I do not oppose your wishes therefore in returning to

Prague; I merely chose a time when you did not contemplate it, and I would wager that, after all, you are delighted to be freed from the annoyance which the quickest preparations for departure entail. My position became intolerable, and you did not perceive it. Kiss me dear papa, and do not frighten me with those angry looks of yours."

In thus speaking, Amelia, as well as her attendant, stifled a great inclination to laugh; for the baron never had an angry look for any one, much less for his cherished daughter. He only rolled his great bewildered eyes, a little stupefied, it must be confessed, by surprise. If he experienced any annoyance at seeing himself fooled in such wise, and any real vexation at leaving his brother and sister without bidding them adieu, he was so astonished at the turn things had taken, that his uneasiness changed to admiration of his daughter's tact, and he could only exclaim—

"But how could you arrange everything so that I had not the least suspicion? Faith, I little thought when I took off my boots, and sent my horse back to the stable, that I was off for Prague, and that I should not dine to-day with my brother. It is a strange adventure, and nobody will believe me when I tell it. But where have you put my travelling-cap, Amelia? Who could sleep in a carriage with this hat glued to one's ears?"

"Here it is, dear papa," said the merry girl, presenting him with his fur cap, which he instantly placed on his head with the utmost satisfaction.

"But my bottle? you have certainly forgotten it, you little wicked one."

"Oh! certainly not," she exclaimed, handing him a large crystal flask, covered with Russia leather and mounted with silver. "I filled it myself with the best Hungary wine from my aunt's cellar. But you had better taste it yourself; I know it is the description you prefer."

"And my pipe and pouch of Turkish tobacco?"

"Nothing is forgotten," said Amelia's maid; "his excellency the baron will find everything packed in the carriage. Nothing has been omitted to enable him to pass the journey agreeably."

"Well done!" said the baron, filling his pipe, "but that does not clear you of all culpability in this matter, my dear Amelia. You will render your father ridiculous, and make him the laughing stock of every one."

"Dear papa, it is I who seem ridiculous in the eyes of the world, when I apparently refuse to marry an amiable cousin, who does not even deign to look at me, and who, under my very eyes pays assiduous court to my music mistress. I have suffered this humiliation long enough, and I do not think there are many girls of my rank, my age, and my appearance, who would not have resented it more seriously. Of one thing I am certain, that there are girls who would not have endured what I have done for the last eighteen months; but, on the contrary, would have put an end to the farce by running off with themselves, if they had failed in procuring a partner in their flight. For my part, I am satisfied to run off with my father; it is a more novel as well as a more proper step. What think you, dear papa?"

"Why, I think the devil's in you," replied the baron, kissing his daughter; and he passed the rest of his journey gaily, drinking, eating, and smoking by turns, without making any further complaint, or expressing any farther astonishment.

This event did not produce the sensation in that family at the Castle

of the Giants which the little baroness had flattered herself it would do. To begin with Count Albert, he might have passed a week without noticing the absence of the young baroness, and when the canoness informed him of it, he merely remarked:—"This is the only clever thing which the clever Amelia has done since she set foot here. As to my good uncle, I hope he will soon return to us."

"For my part," said old Count Christian, "I regret the departure of my brother, because at my age one reckons by weeks and days. What is not long for you, Albert, is an eternity for me, and I am not so certain as you are of seeing my peaceful and easy-tempered Frederick again. Well, it's all Amelia's doings," added he, smiling as he threw aside the saucy, yet cajoling letter of the young baroness. "Women's spite pardons not. You were not formed for each other, my children, and my pleasant dreams have vanished."

While thus speaking, the old count fixed his eyes upon the countenance of his son with a sort of melancholy satisfaction, as if anticipating some indication of regret; but he found none, and Albert, tenderly pressing his arm, made him understand that he thanked him for relinquishing a project so contrary to his inclination.

"God's will be done!" ejaculated the old man, "and may your heart, my son, be free. You are now well, happy, and contented amongst us. I can now die in peace, and a father's love will comfort you after our final separation."

"Do not speak of separation, dear father," exclaimed the young count, his eyes suddenly filling with tears; "I cannot bear the idea."

The canoness, who began to be affected, received at this moment a significant glance from the chaplain, who immediately rose, and with feigned discretion left the room. This was the signal and the order. She thought, not without regret and apprehension, that the moment was at length come when she must speak, and closing her eyes like a person about to leap from the window of a house on fire, she thus began, stammering and becoming paler than usual:—

"Certainly Albert loves his father tenderly, and would not willingly inflict on him a mortal blow."

Albert raised his head, and gazed at his aunt with such a keen and penetrating look that she could not utter another word. The old count appeared not to have heard this strange observation, and in the silence which followed, poor Wenceslawa remained trembling beneath her nephew's glance, like a partridge fascinated before the pointer.

But Count Christian, rousing from his reverie after a few minutes, replied to his sister as if she had continued to speak, or as if he had read in her mind the revelations she was about to make.

"Dear sister," said he, "if I may give you an advice, it is not to torment yourself with things which you do not understand. You have never known what it is to love, and the austere rules of a canoness are not those which befit a young man."

"Good God!" murmured the astonished canoness. "Either my brother does not understand me, or his reason and piety are about to desert him. Is it possible that in his weakness he would encourage or treat lightly—?"

"How? aunt!" interrupted Albert in a firm tone, and with a strange countenance. "Speak out, since you are forced to it. Explain yourself clearly; there must be an end to this constraint—we must understand each other."

"No, sister; you need not speak," replied the count; "you have

nothing new to tell me. I understand perfectly well, without having seemed to do so, what has been going on for some time past. The period is not yet come to explain ourselves on that subject; when it does, I shall know how to act."

He began immediately to speak on other subjects, and left the canoness astonished, and Albert hesitating and troubled. When the chaplain was informed of the manner in which the head of the family received the counsel which he had indirectly given him, he was seized with terror. Count Christian, although seemingly irresolute and indolent, had never been a weak man, and sometimes surprised those who knew him, by suddenly arousing himself from a kind of somnolency, and acting with energy and wisdom. The priest was afraid of having gone too far, and of being reprimanded. He commenced therefore to undo his work very quickly, and persuaded the canoness not to interfere further. A fortnight glided away in this manner without anything suggesting to Consuelo that she was a subject of anxiety to the family. Albert continued his attentions, and announced the departure of Amelia as a short absence, but did not suffer her to suspect the cause. She began to leave her apartment; and the first time she walked in the garden, the old Christian supported the tottering steps of the invalid on his weak and trembling arm.

CHAPTER LI.

It was indeed a happy day for Albert when he saw her whom he had restored to life, leaning on the arm of his father, and offer him her hand in the presence of his family, saying, with an ineffable smile, "This is he who saved me, and tended me as if I had been his sister."

But this day, which was the climax of his happiness, changed suddenly, and more than he could have anticipated, his relations with Consuelo. Henceforth, the formalities of the family circle precluded her being often alone with him. The old count, who appeared to have even a greater regard for her than before her illness, bestowed the utmost care upon her, with a kind of paternal gallantry which she felt deeply. The canoness observed a prudent silence, but nevertheless made it a point to watch over all her movements, and to form a third party in all her interviews with Albert. At length, as the latter gave no indication of returning mental alienation, they determined to have the pleasure of receiving, and even inviting, relations and neighbors long neglected. They exhibited a kind of simple and tender ostentation in showing how polite and sociable the young Count Rudolstadt had become, and Consuelo, seemed to exact from him, by her looks and example, the fulfilment of the wishes of his relations, in exercising the duties of a hospitable host, and displaying the manners of a man of the world.

This sudden transformation cost him a good deal: he submitted to it, however, to please her he loved, but he would have been better satisfied with longer conversations and a less interrupted intercourse with her. He patiently endured whole days of constraint and annoyance, in order to obtain in the evening a word of encouragement or gratitude. But when the canoness came, like an unwelcome spectre,

and placed herself between them, he felt his soul troubled and his strength abandon him. He passed nights of torment, and often approached the cistern, which remained clear and pellucid since the day he had ascended from it, bearing Consuelo in his arms. Plunged in mournful reverie, he almost cursed the oath which bound him never to return to his hermitage. He was terrified to feel himself thus unhappy, and not to have the power of burying his grief in his subterranean retreat.

The change in his features after this sleeplessness, and the transitory but gradually more frequent return of his gloomy and distracted air could not fail to excite the observation of his relatives and friend; but the latter found means to disperse these clouds and regain her empire over him whenever it was threatened. She commenced to sing, and immediately the young count, charmed or subdued, was consoled by tears, or animated with new enthusiasm. This was an infallible remedy; and when he was able to address a few words to her in private, "Consuelo," he exclaimed, "you know the paths to my soul: you possess the power refused to the common herd, and possess it more than any other being in this world. You speak in language divine; you know how to express the most sublime emotions, and communicate the impulses of your own inspired soul. Sing always when you see me downcast; the words of your songs have but little sense for me, they are but the theme, the imperfect indication on which the music turns and is developed. I hardly hear them; what alone I hear, and what penetrates into my very soul, is your voice, your accent, your inspiration. Music expresses all that the mind dreams and foresees of mystery and grandeur. It is the manifestation of a higher order of ideas and sentiments than any to which human speech can give expression. It is the revelation of the infinite; and when you sing, I only belong to humanity in so far as humanity has drunk in what is divine and eternal in the bosom of the Creator. All that your lips refuse of consolation and support in the ordinary routine of life—all that social tyranny forbids your heart to reveal—your songs convey to me a hundredfold. You then respond to me with your whole soul, and my soul replies to yours in hope and fear, in transports of enthusiasm and rapture."

Sometimes Albert spoke thus, in Spanish, to Consuelo in presence of his family; but the evident annoyance which the canoness experienced, as well as a sense of propriety, prevented the young-girl from replying. At length one day when they were alone in the garden, and he again spoke of the pleasures he felt in hearing her sing:

"Since music is a language more complete and more persuasive than that of words," said she, "why do you not speak thus to me, you who understand it better than I do?"

"I do not understand you, Consuelo," said the young count, surprised; "I am only a musician in listening to you."

"Do not endeavor to deceive me," she replied; "I never but once heard sounds divinely human drawn from the violin, and it was by you, Albert, in the grotto of the Schreckenstein. I heard you that day before you saw me; I discovered your secret; but you must forgive me, and allow me again to hear that delightful air, of which I recollect a few bars, and which revealed to me beauties in music, to which I was previously a stranger."

Consuelo sang in a low tone a few phrases which she recollected indistinctly, but which Albert immediately recognized.

"It is a popular hymn," said he, "on some Hussite words. The words are by my ancestor, Hyncko Podiebrad, the son of King George, and one of the poets of the country. We have an immense number of admirable poems by Streye, Simon Lomnický, and many others, which are prohibited by the police. These religious and national songs, set to music by the unknown geniuses of Bohemia are not all preserved in the memory of her inhabitants. The people retain some of them, however, and Zdenko, who has an extraordinary memory and an excellent taste for music, knows a great many, which I have collected and arranged. They are very beautiful, and you will have pleasure in learning them. But I can only let you hear them in my hermitage; my violin, with all my music, is there. I have there precious manuscripts, collections of ancient Catholic and Protestant authors. I will wager that you do not know either Josquin, many of whose themes Luther has transmitted to us in his choruses, nor the younger Claude, nor Arcadelt, nor George Rhaw, nor Benoit Ducis, nor John de Wiess. Would not this curious research induce you, dear Consuelo, to pay another visit to my grotto, from which I have been exiled so long a time, and to visit my church, which you have not yet seen?"

This proposal, although it excited the curiosity of the young artiste, was tremblingly listened to. This frightful grotto recalled recollections which she could not think of without a shudder, and in spite of all the confidence she placed in him, the idea of returning there alone with Albert caused a painful emotion, which he quickly perceived.

"You dislike the idea of this pilgrimage," said he, "which nevertheless you promised to renew: let us speak of it no more. Faithful to my oath, I shall never undertake it without you."

"You remind me of mine, Albert," she replied, "and I shall fulfill it as soon as you ask it; but, my dear doctor, you forget that I have not yet the necessary strength. Would you not first permit me to see this curious music, and hear this admirable artist, who plays on the violin much better than I sing?"

"I know not if you jest, dear sister, but this I know, that you shall hear me nowhere but in my grotto. It was there I first tried to make my violin express the feelings of my heart; for, although I had for many years a brilliant and frivolous professor, largely paid by my father, I did not understand it. It was there I learned what true music is, and what a sacrilegious mockery is substituted for it by the greater portion of mankind. For my own part, I declare that I could not draw a sound from my violin, if my spirit were not bowed before the divinity. Were I even to see you unmoved beside me, attentive merely to the composition of the pieces I play and curious to scrutinize my talent, I doubt not that I would play so ill that you would soon weary of listening to me. I have never, since I knew how to use it, touched the instrument consecrated by me to the praise of God or to the expression of my ardent prayers, without feeling myself transported into an ideal world, and without obeying a sort of mysterious inspiration not always under my control."

"I am not unworthy," replied Consuelo, deeply impressed and at attention, "to comprehend your feelings with regard to music. I hope soon to be able to join your prayer with a soul so fervent and collected that my presence shall not interfere with your inspiration. Ah, my dear Albert, why cannot my master Porpora hear what you say of the heavenly art? He would throw himself at your feet

Nevertheless, this great artist himself is less severe in his views on this subject than you are. He thinks the singer and the virtuoso should draw their inspiration from the sympathy and admiration of their auditory."

"It is perhaps because Porpora confounds, in music, religious sentiment with human thought, and that he looks upon sacred music with the eyes of a Catholic. If I were in his place I would reason as he does. If I were in a communion of faith and sympathy with a people professing the same worship as myself, I would seek in contact with these souls, animated with a like religious sentiment, the inspiration which heretofore I have been forced to court in solitude, and which consequently I have hitherto imperfectly realized. If ever I have the pleasure of mingling the tones of my violin with those of your divine voice, Consuelo, doubtless I would ascend higher than I have ever done, and my prayer would be more worthy of the Deity. But do not forget, dear child, that up to this day my opinions have been an abomination in the eyes of those who surrounded me, and that those whom they failed to shock, would have turned them into ridicule. This is why I have hidden as a secret between God, poor Zdenko, and myself, the humble gift which I possess. My father likes music, and would have this instrument, which is sacred to me as the cymbals of the Elusinian mysteries, conduce to his amusement. What would become of me if they were to ask me to accompany a cavatina for Amelia? and what would be my father's feelings if I were to play one of those old Hussite airs which have sent so many Bohemians into the mines or to the scaffold? or a more modern hymn of our Lutheran ancestors, from whom he blushes to have descended? Alas! Consuelo, I know nothing more modern. There are, no doubt, admirable things of a later date. From what you tell me of Handel and the other great masters from whose works you have been instructed, their music would seem to me superior in many respects to that which I am about to teach you. But to know and learn this music, it would be necessary to put myself in relation with another musical world, and it is with you alone that I can resolve to do so—with you alone I can seek the despised or neglected treasure which you are about to bestow on me in overflowing measure."

"And I," said Consuelo, smiling, "think I shall not undertake the charge of this education. What I heard in the grotto was so beautiful, so grand, so incomparable, that I should fear in doing so, only to muddy a spring of crystal. Oh! Albert, I see plainly that you know more of music than I do. And now what will you say to the profane music of which I am forced to be a professor? I fear to discover in this case, as in the other, that I have hitherto been beneath my mission, and guilty of equal ignorance and frivolity."

"Far from thinking so, Consuelo, I look upon your profession as sacred; and as it is the loftiest which a woman can embrace, so is your soul the most worthy to fill such an office."

"Stay—stay—dear count," replied Consuelo, smiling. "From my often speaking to you of the convent where I learned music, and the church where I sung the praises of God, you conclude that I was destined to the service of the altar, or the modest teachings of the cloister. But if I should inform you that the zingarella, faithful to her origin, was from infancy the sport of circumstances, and that her education was at once a mixture of religious and profane, to which her will was equally inclined, careless whether it were in the monastery or the theatre—?"

"Certain that God has placed his seal on your forehead and devoted you to holiness from your mother's womb, I should not trouble myself about these things, but retain the conviction that you would be as pure in the theatre as in the cloister."

"What! would not your strict ideas of morality be shocked at being brought in contact with an actress?"

"In the dawn of religion," said he, "the theatre and the temple were one and the same sanctuary. In the purity of their primitive ideas, religious worship took the form of popular shows. The arts gave their birth at the foot of the altar. The dance itself, that art now consecrated to ideas of impure voluptuousness, was the music of the senses in the festivals of the gods. Music and poetry were the highest expressions of faith, and woman endowed with genius and beauty was at once a sybil and priestess. To these severely grand forms of the past, absurd and culpable distinctions succeeded. Religion proscribed beauty from its festivals, and woman from its solemnities. Instead of ennobling and directing love, it banished and condemned it. Beauty, woman, love, cannot lose their empire. Men have raised for themselves other temples which they call theatres, and where no other god presides. Is it your fault, Consuelo, if they have become dens of corruption? Nature, who perfects her prodigies without troubling herself as to how men may receive them, has formed you to shine among your sex, and to shed over the world the treasures of your power and genius.—The cloister and the tomb are synonymous: you cannot, without morally committing suicide, bury the gifts of providence. You were obliged to wing your flight to a freer atmosphere. Energy is the condition of certain natures; an irresistible impulse impels them; and the decrees of the Deity in this respect are so decided, that he takes away the faculties which he has bestowed, so soon as they are neglected. The artist perishes and becomes extinct in obscurity, just as the thinker wanders and pines in solitude, and just as all human intellect is deteriorated, and weakened, and enervated, by inaction and isolation. Repair to the theatre, Consuelo, if you please, and submit with resignation to the apparent degradation, as the representative for the moment of a soul destined to suffer, of a lofty mind which vainly seeks for sympathy in the world around us, but which is forced to abjure a melancholy that is not the element of its life, and out of which the breath of the Holy Spirit imperiously expels it."

Albert continued to speak in this strain for a considerable time with great animation, hurrying Consuelo on to the recesses of his retreat. He had little difficulty in communicating to her his own enthusiasm for art, as in making her forget her first feeling of repugnance to re-enter the grotto. When she saw that he anxiously desired it, she began to entertain a wish for this interview, in order to become better acquainted with the ideas which this ardent yet timid man dared to express before her so boldly. These ideas were new to Consuelo, and perhaps they were entirely so in the mouth of a person of noble rank of that time and country. They only struck her however as the bold and frank expression of sentiments which she herself had frequently experienced in all their force. Devout, and an actress, she every day heard the canoness and the chaplain unceasingly condemn her brethren of the stage. In seeing herself restored to her proper sphere by a serious and reflecting man, she felt her heart throb and her bosom swell with exultation, as if she had been carried up into a more ele-

vated and congenial life. Her eyes were moistened with tears and her cheeks glowed with a pure and holy emotion, when at the end of an avenue she perceived the canoness, who was seeking her.

"Ah! dear priestess," said Albert, pressing her arm against his breast, "will you not come to pray in my church?"

"Yes, certainly I shall go," she replied.

"And when?"

"Whenever you wish. Do you think I am able yet to undertake this new exploit?"

"Yes; because we shall go to the Schreckenstein in broad daylight and by a less dangerous route than the well. Do you feel sufficient courage to rise before the dawn and to escape through the gates as soon as they are opened? I shall be in this underwood which you see at the side of the hill there by the stone cross, and shall serve as your guide."

"Very well, I promise," replied Consuelo, not without a slight palpitation of heart.

"It appears rather cool this evening for so long a walk—does it not?" asked the canoness, accosting them in her calm yet searching manner.

Albert made no reply. He could not dissemble. Consuelo, who did not experience equal emotion, passed her other arm within that of the canoness, and kissed her neck. Wenceslawa vainly pretended indifference, but in spite of herself she submitted to the ascendancy of this devout and affectionate spirit. She sighed, and on entering the castle proceeded to put up a prayer for her conversion.

CHAPTER LII.

MANY days passed away however without Albert's wish being accomplished. It was in vain that Consuelo rose before the dawn and passed the drawbridge; she always found his aunt or the chaplain wandering on the esplanade, and from thence reconnoitering all the open country which she must traverse in order to gain the copsewood on the hill. She determined to walk alone within range of their observation, and give up the project of joining Albert, who, from his green and wooded retreat, recognized the enemy on the look-out, took a long walk in the forest glades; and re-entered the castle without being perceived.

"You have had an opportunity of enjoying an early walk, Signora Porporina," said the canoness at breakfast. "Were you not afraid that the dampness of the morning might be injurious to your health?"

"It was I, aunt, who advised the signora to breathe the freshness of the morning air; and I think these walks will be very useful to her."

"I should have thought that, for a person who devotes herself to the cultivation of her voice," said the canoness, with a little affectation, "our mornings are somewhat foggy. But if it is under your directions——"

"Have confidence in Albert," interrupted Count Christian; "he has proved himself as good a physician as he is a good son and a faithful friend."

The dissimulation to which Consuelo was forced to yield with blushes, was very painful to her. She complained gently to Albert, when she had an opportunity of speaking to him in private, and begged him to renounce his project, at least until his aunt's vigilance should be foiled. Albert consented, but entreated her to continue her walks in the environs of the park, so that he might join her whenever an opportunity presented itself.

Consuelo would gladly have been excused, although she liked walking, and felt how necessary to her convalescence it was, to enjoy exercise for some time every day, free from the restraint of this enclosure of walls and moats, where her thoughts were stifled as if she had been a prisoner; yet it gave her pain thus to practise deception towards those whom she respected, and from whom she received hospitality. Love, however, removes many obstacles, but friendship reflects and Consuelo reflected much. They were now enjoying the last fine days of summer; for several months had passed since Consuelo had come to dwell in the Castle of the Giants. What a summer for Consuelo! The palest autumn of Italy was more light, and rich, and genial. But this warm, moist air, this sky, often veiled by white and fleecy clouds, had also their charm and their peculiar beauty. She found an attraction in these solitary walks, which increased perhaps her disinclination to revisit the cavern. In spite of the resolution she had formed, she felt that Albert would take a load from her bosom in giving her back her promise; and when she found herself no longer under the spell of his supplicating looks and enthusiastic words, she secretly blessed his good aunt, who prevented her fulfilling her engagement by the obstacles she every day placed in the way.

One morning, as she wandered along the bank of the mountain streamlet, she observed Albert leaning on the balustrade of the parterre, far above her. Notwithstanding the distance which separated them, she felt as if incessantly under the disturbed and passionate gaze of this man, by whom she suffered herself in so great a degree to be governed. "My situation here is somewhat strange!" she exclaimed; "while this persevering friend observes me to see that I am faithful to the promise I have made, without doubt I am watched from some other part of the castle, to see that I maintain no relations with him that their customs and ideas of propriety would proscribe. I do not know what is passing in their minds. The Baroness Amelia does not return. The canoness appears to grow cold towards me, and to distrust me. Count Christian redoubles his attentions, and expresses his dread of the arrival of Porpora, which will probably be the signal for my departure. Albert appears to have forgotten that I forbade him to hope. As if he had a right to expect everything from me, he asks nothing, and does not abjure a passion which seems, notwithstanding my inability to return it, to render him happy. In the mean time, here I am, as if I were engaged in attending every morning at an appointed place of meeting, to which I wish he may not come, exposing myself to the blame—nay, for aught I know, perhaps to the scorn—of a family who cannot understand either my friendship for him nor my position towards him; since indeed I do not comprehend them myself nor foresee their result.

"What a strange destiny is mine! Shall I then be condemned forever to devote myself to others, without being loved in return, or without being able to love those whom I esteem?"

In the midst of these reflections a profound melancholy seized her,

She felt the necessity of belonging to herself—that sovereign and legitimate want, the necessary condition of progress and development of the true artist. The watchful care which she had promised to observe towards Count Albert, weighed upon her as an iron chain. The bitter recollections of Anzoletto and of Venice clung to her, in the inaction and solitude of a life too monotonous and regular for her powerful organization.

She stopped near the rock which Albert had often shown her as being the place where he had first seen her, an infant, tied with thongs on her mother's shoulders like the pedlar's pack, and running over mountains and valleys, like the grasshopper of the fable, heedless of the morrow, and without a thought of advancing old age and inexorable poverty. "O, my poor mother!" thought the young zingarella, "here am I, brought back by my incomprehensible fate to a spot which you once traversed only to retain a vague recollection of it and the pledge of a touching kindness. You were then young and handsome, and doubtless could have met many a place where love and hospitality would have awaited you—society which would have absolved and transformed you, and in the bosom of which your painful and wandering life would have at last tasted comfort and repose. But you felt, and always said, that this comfort, this repose, were mortal weariness to the artist's soul. You were right—I feel it; for behold me in this castle, where, as elsewhere, you would pause but one night. Here I am, with every comfort around me, pampered, caressed, and with a powerful lord at my feet: and nevertheless, I am weary, weary, and suffocated with restraint."

Consuelo, overpowered with an extraordinary emotion, seated herself on the rock. She looked at the sandy path, as if she thought to find there the print of her mother's naked feet. The sheep in passing had left some locks of their fleece upon the thorns. This fleece, of a reddish brown, recalled the russet hue of her mother's coarse mantle—that mantle which had so long protected her against sun and cold, against dust and rain. She had seen it fall from her shoulders piece by piece. "And we, too," she said, "were wandering sheep; we, too, left fragments of our apparel on the wayside thorn, but we always bore along with us the proud love and the full enjoyment of our dear liberty."

While musing thus, Consuelo fixed her eyes upon the path of yellow sand which wound gracefully over the hill, and which, widening as it reached the valley, disappeared towards the north among the green pine-trees and the dark heath. "What is more beautiful than a road?" she thought. "It is the symbol and image of a life of activity and variety. What pleasing ideas are connected in my mind with the capricious turns of this! I do not recollect the country through which it winds, and yet I have formerly passed through it. But it should indeed be beautiful, were it only as a contrast to yonder dark castle, which sleeps eternally on its immovable rocks. How much pleasanter to the eye are these gravelled paths, with their glowing hue, and the golden broom which shadow them, than the straight alleys and stiff paling of the proud domain? With merely looking at the formal lines of a garden, I feel wearied and overcome. Why should my feet seek to reach that which my eyes and thoughts can at once embrace, while the free road, which turns aside and is half hidden in the woods, invites me to follow its windings and penetrate its mysteries? And then it is the path for all human kind—it is the

highway of the world. It belongs to no master, to close and open it at pleasure. It is only the powerful and rich that are entitled to tread its flowery margins and to breathe its rich perfume. Every bird may build its nest amid its branches; every wanderer may repose his head upon its stones—nor wall nor paling shuts out his horizon. Heaven does not close before him; so far as his eye can reach, the highway is a land of liberty. To the right, to the left, woods, fields—all have masters; but the road belongs to him to whom nothing else belongs, and how fondly therefore does he love it! The meanest beggar prefers it to asylums, which, were they rich as palaces, would be but prisons to him. His dream, his passion, his hope, will ever be the highway. O, my mother, you knew it well, and often told me so! Why cannot I reanimate your ashes which repose far from me, beneath the seaweed of the lagoons? Why canst thou not carry me on thy strong shoulders, and bear me far, far away, where the swallow skims onward to the blue and distant hills, and where the memory of the past and the longings after vanished happiness, cannot follow the light-footed artist, who travels still faster than they do, and each day places a new horizon, a second world, between her and the enemies of liberty? My poor mother, why canst thou not still by turns cherish and oppress me, and lavish alternate kisses and blows, like the wind which sometimes caresses and sometimes lays prostrate the young corn upon the fields, to raise and cast it down again according to its fantasy? Thou hadst a firmer soul than mine, and thou wouldst have torn me, either willingly or by force, from the bonds which daily entangle me!”

In the midst of this entrancing yet mournful reverie, Consuelo was struck by the tones of a voice that made her start as if a red-hot iron had been placed upon her heart. It was that of a man from the ravine below, humming in the Venetian dialect the song of the “*Echo*,” one of the most original compositions of Chiozzetto.* The person who sung did not exert the full power of his voice, and his breathing seemed affected by walking. He warbled a few notes now and then, stopping from time to time to converse with another person, just as if he had wished to dissipate the weariness of his journey. He then resumed his song as before, as if by way of exercise, interrupted it again to speak to his companion, and in this manner approached the spot where Consuelo sat, motionless, and as if about to faint. She could not hear the conversation which took place, as the distance was too great; nor could she see the travellers in consequence of an intervening projection of the rock. But could she be for an instant deceived in that voice, in those accents, which she knew so well, and the fragments of that song which she herself had taught, and so often made her graceless pupil repeat?

At length the two invisible travellers drew near, and she heard one whose voice was unknown to her, say to the other, in bad Italian, and with the patois of the country, “Ah, signor, do not go up there—the horses could not follow you, and you would lose sight of me; keep by the banks of the stream. See, the road lies before us, and the way you are taking is only a path for foot-passengers.”

The voice which Consuelo knew became more distant, and appeared to descend, and soon she heard him ask what fine castle that was on the other side.

* *Joan Orzes de Chiozia, sixteenth century.*

"That is Reisenburg, which means the Castle of the Giants," replied the guide, for he was one by profession, and Consuelo could now distinguish him at the bottom of the hill, on foot, and leading two horses covered with sweat. The bad state of the roads, recently inundated by the torrent, had obliged the riders to dismount. The traveller followed at a little distance, and Consuelo could at length see him by leaning over the rock which protected her. His back was towards her, and he wore a travelling-dress, which so altered his appearance, and even his walk, that, had she not heard his voice, she could not have recognised him. He stopped, however, to look at the castle, and taking off his broad-leafed hat, wiped his face with his handkerchief. Although only able to distinguish him imperfectly from the great height at which she was placed, she knew at once those golden and flowing locks, and recognised the movement he was accustomed to make in raising them from his forehead or neck when he was warm.

"This seems a very fine castle," said he. "If I had time, I should like to ask the giants for some breakfast."

"Oh, do not attempt it," said the guide, shaking his head. "The Rudolstadt's only receive beggars and relations."

"Are they not more hospitable than that? May the devil seize them, then!"

"Listen—it is because they have something to conceal."

"A treasure or a crime?"

"Oh, nothing of that kind; it is their son, who is mad."

"Duce take him, too, then; it would do them a service."

The guide began to laugh; Anzoletto commenced to sing.

"Come," said the guide, "we are now over the worst of the road; if you wish to mount, we may gallop as far as Tusta. The road is magnificent—nothing but sand. Once there, you will find the highway to Prague, and excellent post-horses."

"In that case," said Anzoletto, adjusting his stirrups, "I may say, the fiends seize thee, too! for your jades, your mountain roads, and yourself, are all becoming very tiresome."

Thus speaking, he slowly mounted his nag, sunk the spurs in its side, and without troubling himself about the guide, who followed him with great difficulty, he darted off towards the north, raising clouds of dust on that road which Consuelo had so long contemplated, and on which she had so little expected to see pass, like a fatal vision, the enemy of her life, the constant torture of her heart. She followed him with her eyes, in a state of stupor impossible to express. Struck with disgust and fear, so long as she was within hearing of his voice, she had remained hidden and trembling. But when he disappeared, when she thought she had lost sight of him perhaps for ever, she experienced only violent despair. She threw herself over the rock to see him for a longer time; the undying love which she cherished for him awoke again with fervor, and she would have recalled him, but her voice died on her lips. The hand of death seemed to press heavily on her bosom; her eyes grew dim; a dull noise, like the dashing of the sea, murmured in her ears; and falling exhausted at the foot of the rock, she found herself in the arms of Albert, who had approached without being perceived, and who bore her, apparently dying, to a more shady and secluded part of the mountain.

CHAPTER LIII.

THE fear of betraying her emotion, a secret so long hidden in the depths of her soul, restored Consuelo to strength, and enabled her to control herself, so that Albert perceived nothing extraordinary in her situation. Just as the young Anzoleto and his guide disappeared among the distant pine-trees, and Albert might therefore attribute to his own presence the danger she had incurred of falling down the precipice. The idea of this danger, of which he supposed himself to be the cause in terrifying her by his sudden approach, so distressed him, that he did not at first perceive Consuelo's confused replies. Consuelo, in whom he still inspired a sort of superstitious terror, feared that he might divine the mystery. But Albert, since love had made him live the life of other men, seemed to have lost the apparently supernatural faculties which he had formerly possessed. She soon conquered her agitation, and Albert's proposal to conduct her to his hermitage, did not displease her at this moment, as it would have done a few hours previously. It seemed as if the grave and serious character and gloomy abode of this man, who regarded her with such devoted affection, offered themselves as a refuge in which she could find strength to combat the memory of her unhappy passion. "It is Providence," thought she, "who has sent me this friend in the midst of my trials, and the dark sanctuary to which he would lead me, is an emblem of the tomb in which I should wish to be buried, rather than pursue the track of the evil genius who has just passed me. Oh, yes, my God! rather than follow his footsteps, let the earth open to receive me, and snatch me forever from the living world!"

"Dear Consolation," said Albert, "I came to tell you that my aunt, having to examine her accounts this morning, is not thinking of us, and we are at length at liberty to accomplish our pilgrimage. Nevertheless, if you still feel any repugnance to revisit places which recall so much suffering and terror——"

"No, my friend," replied Consuelo: "on the contrary, I have never felt better disposed to worship with you, and to soar aloft together on the wings of that sacred song which you promised to let me hear."

They took the way together towards the Schreckenstein, and as they buried themselves in the wood in an opposite direction to that taken by Anzoleto, Consuelo felt more at ease, as if each step tended to weaken the charm of which she felt the force. She walked on so eagerly, that although grave and reserved, Count Albert might have ascribed her anxiety to a desire to please, if he had not felt that distrust of himself and of his destiny, which formed the principal feature of his character.

He conducted her to the foot of the Schreckenstein, and stopped at the entrance of a grotto filled with stagnant water, and nearly hidden by the luxuriant vegetation. "This grotto, in which you may remark some traces of a vaulted construction," said he, "is called in the country 'The Monk's Cave.' Some think it was a cellar of a convent, at a period when, in place of these ruins, there stood here a fortified town; others relate that it was subsequently the retreat of a repentant criminal, who turned hermit. However this may be, no one dares to penetrate the recesses; and every one says that the water is deep, and is imbued with a mortal poison, owing to the veins

of copper through which it runs in its passage. But this water is really neither deep nor dangerous; it sleeps upon a bed of rocks, and we can easily cross it, Consuelo, if you will once again confide in the strength of my arm and the purity of my love."

Thus saying, after having satisfied himself that no one had followed or observed them, he took her in his arms and entering the water, which reached almost to his knee, he cleared a passage through the shrubs and matted ivy, which concealed the bottom of the grotto. In a very short time he set her down upon a bank of fine dry sand, in a place completely dark. He immediately lighted the lantern with which he was furnished, and after some turns in subterranean galleries, similar to those which Consuelo had already traversed, they found themselves at the door of a cell, opposite to that which she had opened the first time.

"This subterranean building," said he, "was originally destined to serve as a place of refuge in time of war, either for the principal inhabitants of the town, which covered the hill, or for the lords of the Castle of the Giants, to whom this town belonged, who could enter it secretly by the passages with which you are already acquainted. If a hermit, as they assert, since inhabited the Monk's Cave, it is probable that he was aware of this retreat; because the gallery which we have just traversed, has been recently cleared out, whilst I have found those leading from the castle, so filled up in many places with earth and gravel, that I found difficulty in removing them. Besides, the relics I discovered here, the remnants of matting, the pitcher, the crucifix, the lamp, and above all the skeleton of a man lying on his back, his hands crossed on his breast, as if in a last prayer at the hour of his final sleep, proved to me that a hermit had here piously and peaceably ended his mysterious existence. Our peasants still believe that the hermit's spirit inhabits the depths of the mountain. They affirm that they have often seen him wander around it, or flit to the heights by the light of the moon; that they have heard him pray, sigh, sob, and that even a strange, incomprehensible music has been wafted towards them, like a suppressed sigh, on the wings of the breeze. Even I myself, Consuelo, when despair peopled nature around me with phantoms and prodigies, have thought I saw the gloomy penitent prostrate under the Hussite. I have fancied that I heard his plaintive sobs and heart-rending sighs ascend from the depths of the abyss. But since I discovered and inhabited this cell, I have never seen any hermit but myself—any spectre but my own figure—nor have I heard any sobs save those which issued from my own breast."

Since Consuelo's first interview with Albert in the cavern, she had never heard him utter an irrational word. She did not venture, therefore, to allude to the manner in which he had addressed herself, nor to the illusions in the midst of which she had surprised him. But she was astonished to observe that they seemed absolutely forgotten, and not wishing to recal them, she merely asked if solitude had really delivered him from the disquietude of which he spoke.

"I cannot tell you precisely," he replied; "and at least not till you exact it, can I urge my memory to the task. I must have been mad, and the efforts I made to conceal it, betrayed it yet more. When, thanks to one whom tradition had handed down the secret of these caverns, I succeeded in escaping from the solicitude of my relatives, and hiding my despair, my existence changed. I recovered a sort of empire over myself, and secure of concealment from troublesome wit-

nesses, I was able at length to appear tranquil and resigned in the bosom of my family."

Consuelo perceived that poor Albert was under an illusion in some respects, but this was not the time to enlighten him; and, pleased to hear him speak of the past with such unconcern, she began to examine the cell with more attention than she had bestowed on it the first time. There was no appearance of the care and neatness which she formerly observed. The dampness of the walls, the cold of the atmosphere, and the mouldiness of the books, betrayed complete abandonment. "You see that I have kept my word," said Albert, who had just succeeded with great difficulty in lighting the stove. "I have never set foot here since the day you displayed your power over me by tearing me away."

Consuelo had a question on her lips, but restrained herself. She was about to ask if Zdenko, the friend, the faithful servant, the zealous guardian, had also abandoned and neglected the hermitage. But she recollected the profound sorrow which Albert always displayed when she hazarded a question as to what had become of him, and why she had never seen him since the terrible encounter in the cavern? Albert had always evaded these questions, either by pretending not to understand her, or by begging her to fear nothing for the innocent. She was at first persuaded that Zdenko had received and faithfully fulfilled the command of his master never to appear before his eyes. But when she resumed her solitary walks, Albert, in order to completely reassure her, had sworn, while a deadly paleness overspread his countenance, that she should not encounter Zdenko, who had set out on a long voyage. In fact no one had seen him since that time, and they thought he was dead in some corner, or that he had quitted the country.

Consuelo believed neither of these suppositions. She knew too well the passionate attachment of Zdenko to Albert to think a separation possible. As to his death, she thought of it with a terror she hardly admitted to herself, when she recollected Albert's dreadful oath to sacrifice the life of this unhappy being if necessary to the repose of her he loved. But she rejected this frightful suspicion on recalling the mildness and humanity which the whole of Albert's life displayed. Besides he had enjoyed perfect tranquillity for many months, and no apparent demonstration on the part of Zdenko had reawakened the fury which the young count had for a moment manifested. He had forgotten that unhappy moment which Consuelo also struggled to forget; he only remembered what took place in the cavern whilst he was in possession of his reason. Consuelo therefore concluded that he had forbidden Zdenko to enter or approach the castle, and that the poor fellow, through grief or anger, had condemned himself to voluntary seclusion in the hermitage. She took it for granted that Zdenko would come out on the Schreckenstein only by night for air, and to converse with Albert, who no doubt took care of, and watched over him who had for so long a time taken care of himself. On seeing the condition of the cell, Consuelo was driven to the conclusion that he was angry at his master, and had displayed it by neglecting his retreat. But as Albert had assured her when they entered the grotto, that there was contained in it no cause of alarm, she seized the opportunity when his attention was otherwise engaged, to open the rusty gate of what he called his church, and in this way to reach Zdenko's cell, where doubtless she would find traces of him

recent presence.—The door yielded as soon as she had turned the key, but the darkness was so great that she could see nothing. She waited till Albert had passed into the mysterious oratory which he had promised to show her, and which he was preparing for her reception, and she then took a light and returned cautiously to Zdenko's chamber, not without trembling at the idea of finding him there in person. But there was not the faintest evidence of his existence. The bed of leaves and the sheepskins had been removed. The seat, the tools, the sandals of undressed hide—all had disappeared, and one would have said, to look at the dripping walls, that this vault had never sheltered a living being.

A feeling of sadness and terror took possession of her at this discovery. A mystery shrouded the fate of this unfortunate, and Consuelo accused herself of being perhaps the cause of a deplorable event. There were two natures in Albert: the one wise, the other mad; the one polished, tender, merciful; the other strange, untamed, perhaps violent and implacable. His fancied identity with the fanatic John Ziska, his love for the recollections of Hussite Bohemia, and that mute and patient, but at the same time profound passion which he nourished for herself—all occurred at this moment to her mind, and seemed to confirm her most painful suspicions. Motionless and frozen with horror, she hardly ventured to glance at the cold and naked floor of the grotto, dreading to find on it tracks of blood.

She was still plunged in these reflections, when she heard Albert tune his violin, and soon she heard him playing on the admirable instrument the ancient psalm which she so much wished to hear a second time. The music was so original, and Albert performed it with such sweet expression, that, forgetting her distress, and attracted and as if charmed by a magnetic power, she gently approached the spot where he stood.

CHAPTER LIV.

THE door of the church was open, and Consuelo stopped upon the threshold to observe the inspired virtuoso and the strange sanctuary.—This so-called church was nothing but an immense grotto, hewn, or rather cleft out of the rock irregularly by the hand of nature, and hollowed out by the subterranean force of the water. Scattered torches, placed on gigantic blocks, shed a fantastic light on the green sides of the cavern, and partially revealed dark recesses in the depths of which the huge forms of tall stalactites loomed like spectres alternately seeking and shunning the light. The enormous sedimentary deposits on the sides of the cavern assumed a thousand fantastic forms. Sometimes they seemed devouring serpents, rolling over and interlacing each other. Sometimes hanging from the roof and shooting upwards from the floor they wore the aspect of the colossal teeth of some monster, of which the dark cave beyond might pass for the gaping jaws. Elsewhere they might have been taken for misshapen statues, giant images of the demi-gods of antiquity. A vegetation appropriate to the grotto—huge lichens, rough as dragon's scales; festoons of heavy-leaved scolopendra, tufts of young cypresses recently planted in the middle of the enclosure on little heaps of artificial soil,

not unlike graves—gave the place a terrific and sombre aspect which deeply impressed Consuelo. To her first feeling of terror, admiration however quickly succeeded. She approached and saw Albert standing on the margin of the fountain which sprang up in the midst of the cavern. This water, although gushing out abundantly, was enclosed in so deep a basin that no movement was visible on its surface. It was calm and motionless as a block of dark sapphire, and the beautiful aquatic plants with which Albert and Zdenko had clothed its margin, were not agitated by the slightest motion. The spring was warm at its source, and the tepid exhalations with which it filled the cavern, caused a mild and moist atmosphere favorable to vegetation. It gushed from its fountain in many ramifications, of which some lost themselves under the rocks with a dull noise, while others ran gently into limpid streams in the interior of the grotto and disappeared in the depths beyond.

When Count Albert, who until then had been only trying the strings of his violin, saw Consuelo advance towards him, he came forward to meet her, and assisted her to cross the channels, over which he had thrown, in the deepest spots, some trunks of trees, while in other places rocks on a level with the water, offered an easy passage to those habituated to it. He offered his hand to assist her, and sometimes lifted her in his arms. But this time Consuelo was afraid, not of the torrent which flowed silently and darkly under her feet, but of the mysterious guide towards whom she was drawn by an irresistible sympathy, while an indefinable repulsion at the same time held her back. Having reached the bank she beheld a spectacle not much calculated to reassure her. It was a sort of quadrangular monument, formed of bones and human skulls, arranged as if in a catacomb.

“Do not be uneasy,” said Albert, who felt her shudder. “These are the honored remains of the martyrs of my religion, and they form the altar before which I love to meditate and pray.”

“What is your religion then, Albert?” said Consuelo, in a sweet and melancholy voice.—“Are these bones Hussite or Catholic? Were not both the victims of impious fury, and martyrs of a faith equally sincere? Is it true that you prefer the Hussite doctrines to those of your relatives, and that the reforms subsequent to those of John Huss, do not appear to you sufficiently radical and decisive? Speak, Albert—what am I to believe?”

“If they told you that I preferred the reform of the Hussites to that of the Lutherans, and the great Procopius to the vindictive Calvin, as much as I prefer the exploits of the Taborites to those of the soldiers of Wallenstein, they have told you the truth, Consuelo. But what signifies my creed to you, who seem instinctively aware of truth, and who know the Deity better than I do? God forbid that I should bring you here to trouble your pure soul and peaceful conscience with my tormenting reveries! Remain as you are, Consuelo; you were born pious and good; moreover, you were born poor and obscure, and nothing has changed in you the pure dictates of reason and the light of justice. We can pray together without disputing—you who know everything although having learned nothing, and who know very little after a long and tedious study. In whatever temple you raise your voice, the knowledge of the true God will be in your heart, and the feeling of the true faith will kindle your soul. It is not to instruct you, but in order that your revelation may be im-

parted to me, that I wished our voices and our spirits to unite before this altar, formed of the bones of my fathers."

"I was not mistaken, then, in thinking that these honored remains, as you call them, are those of Hussites, thrown into the fountain of the Schreckenstein during the bloody fury of the civil wars, in the time of your ancestor John Ziska, who, they say, made fearful reprisals? I have been told that, after burning the village, he destroyed the wells. I fancy I can discover in the obscurity of this vault, a circle of hewed stones above my head, which tells me that we are precisely under a spot where I have often sat when fatigued after searching for you in vain. Say, Count Albert, is this really the place that you have baptized as the Stone of Expiation?"

"Yes, it is here," replied Albert, "that torments and atrocious violence have consecrated the asylum of my prayers, and the sanctuary of my grief. You see enormous blocks suspended above our heads, and others scattered on the banks of the stream. The just hands of the Taborites flung them there by the orders of him whom they called the Terrible Blind Man: but they only served to force back the waters towards those subterranean beds in which they succeeded in forcing a passage. The wells were destroyed, and I have covered their ruins with cypress, but it would have needed a mountain to fill this cavern. The blocks which were heaped up in the mouth of the well, were stopped by a winding stair, similar to that which you had the courage to descend in my garden at the castle. Since that time, the gradual pressure of the soil has thrust them closer together, and confines them better. If any portion of the mass escapes, it is during the winter frosts; you have therefore nothing to fear from this fall."

"It was not that of which I was thinking, Albert," replied Consuelo, looking towards the gloomy altar on which he had placed his Stradivarius. "I asked myself why you render exclusive worship to the memory of these victims, as if there were no martyrs on the other side, and as if the crimes of the one were more pardonable than those of the other?"

Consuelo spoke thus in a severe tone, and looking distrustfully at Albert. She remembered Zdenko, and all her questions, had she dared so to utter them, assumed in her mind a tone of interrogation, such as would befit a judge towards a criminal.

The painful emotion which suddenly seized upon the count seemed the confession of remorse. He passed his hands over his forehead, then pressed them against his breast, as if it were being torn asunder. His countenance changed in a frightful manner, and Consuelo feared that he might have only too well understood her.

"You do not know what harm you do me," said he, leaning upon the heap of bones, and drooping his head toward the withered skulls, which seemed to gaze on him from their hollow orbits. "No, you cannot know it, Consuelo, and your cold remarks recal the memory of the dreary past. You do not know that you speak to a man who has lived through ages of grief, and who, after being the blind instrument of inflexible justice in the hands of God, has received his recompense and undergone his punishment. I have so suffered, so wept, so expiated my dreary destiny, so atoned for the horrors to which my fate subjected me, that I had at last flattered myself I could forget them. Forgetfulness!—yes, forgetfulness!—that was the craving which consumed my aching breast; that was my vow and my daily prayer; that was the token of my alliance with man and my recon-

ellation with God, which, during long years, I had implored, prostrate upon these mouldering bones. When I first saw you, Consuelo, I began to hope; when you pitied me, I thought I was saved. See this wreath of withered flowers ready to fall into the dust, and which encircles the skull that surmounts the altar. You do not recognise it, though I have watered it with many a bitter yet soothing tear. It is you who gathered them, you who sent them to me by the companion of my sorrows, the faithful guardian of this sepulchre. Covering them with kisses and tears, I anxiously asked myself if you could ever feel any true and heartfelt regard for one like myself—a pitiless fanatic, an unfeeling tyrant—”

“But what are the crimes you have committed?” said Consuelo, firmly, distracted with a thousand varying emotions, and emboldened by the deep dejection of Albert. “If you have a confession to make, make it here to me, that I may know if I can absolve and love you.”

“Yes, you may absolve me; for he whom you know, Albert of Rudolstadt, has been innocent as a child; but he whom you do not know, John Ziska of the Chalice, has been whirled by the wrath of Heaven into a career of iniquity.”

Consuelo saw the imprudence of which she had been guilty, in rousing the slumbering flame and recalling to Albert’s mind his former madness. This, however, was not the moment to combat it, and she was revolving in her mind some expedient to calm him, and had gradually sunk into a reverie, when suddenly she perceived that Albert no longer spoke, no longer held her hand—that he was not at her side, but standing a few paces off, before the monument, performing on his violin the singular airs with which she had been already so surprised and charmed.

CHAPTER LV.

ALBERT at first attuned his instrument to several of those ancient chaunts, the authors of which are either unknown to us, or forgotten among the Bohemians; but the precious airs and melodies of which Zdenko had retained by ear, whence the Count had discovered the text by dint of study and meditation. He had so thoroughly fed his spirit on these compositions, which seem at a first hearing rude and barbaric, but which are deeply touching and truly fine in the ear of a serious and enlightened judgment, that he had so far assimilated them to himself as to have attained the power of carrying out long improvisations on the idea of those themes, of mingling with them his own ideas, of recovering and developing the primitive sentiment of the compositions, and of abandoning himself to his own personal inspirations, without allowing the original character, so striking and austere, of those ancient chaunts, to be lost or altered in his ingenious and scientific interpretation of them. Consuelo had promised herself that she would hear, and collect these invaluable specimens of the ardent popular genius of old Bohemia. But all power of criticism soon forsook her, as well on account of the meditative humor in which she chanced to be, as in consequence of the vague and rambling tone which pervaded that music, all unfamiliar to her ear.

There is a style of music which may be called natural, because it is

not the offspring of science or reflection, but of an inspiration which sets at defiance all the strictness of rules and convention. I mean popular music, and especially that of the peasantry. How many exquisite compositions are born, live and die, among the peasantry, without ever having been dignified by a correct notation, without ever having deigned to be confined within the absolute limits of a distinct and definite theme. The unknown artist who improvises his rustic ballad while watching his flocks, or guiding his ploughshare, and there are such even in countries which would seem the least poetical, will experience great difficulty in retaining and fixing his fugitive fancies. He communicates his ballad to other musicians, children like himself of nature, and these circulate it from hamlet to hamlet, from cot to cot, each modifying it according to the bent of his own individual genius. It is hence that these pastoral songs and romances, so artlessly striking or so deeply touching, are for the most part lost, and rarely exist above a single century in the memory of their rustic composers. Musicians completely formed under the rules of art rarely trouble themselves to collect them. Many even disdain them from very lack of an intelligence sufficiently pure, and a taste sufficiently elevated to admit of their appreciating them. Others are dismayed by the difficulties which they encounter the moment they endeavor to discover that true and original version, which, perhaps, no longer retains its existence even in the mind of its author, and which certainly was never at any time recognised as a definite and invariable type by any one of his numerous interpreters.

Some of these have altered it through ignorance, others have developed, adorned and embellished it, as an effect of their superiority, because the teachings of their art have not instructed them to repudiate its natural and instinctive spirit. They are not themselves aware that they have transformed the primitive composition, nor are their artless auditors more conscious of it than they. The peasant examines not nor compares. When heaven has made him a musician, he sings as the birds sing, especially as sings the nightingale, whose improvisation is everlasting, although the infinitely varied elements of its strain are the same for ever. Moreover, this popular genius is unlimited in its exuberance.* It has no need to commit its

* If you consider with any attention the bagpipe-players who perform the office of fiddlers in the rural districts in the centre of France, you will perceive that they do not know above two or three hundred compositions, all of the same style and character, which are however never borrowed the one from the other, and you will also ascertain that in less than three years this immense collection is entirely renewed. Not very long ago I had the following conversation with one of these wandering musicians:—"You have learned a little music, have you not?"—"Certainly—I have learned to play the thorough-base-bagpipe, and the key-bagpipe."—"Where did you take your lessons?"—"In the Bourbonnais, in the woods."—"Who was your master?"—"A native of the woods."—"Do you know your notes?"—"I believe so."—"In what key do you play?"—"What key! what does that mean?"—"Don't you play in re?"—"I don't know what you mean by re."—"What are the names of your notes?"—"We call them notes. They have no particular names."—"How do you retain so many different airs?"—"By ear."—"By whom are these airs composed?"—"By many persons, famous musicians of the woods."—"Do they compose many?"—"They are always composing. They never cease from it."—"Have they any other occupation?"—"They cut wood."—"Are they regular woodcutters?"—"Almost all of them are woodcutters. They say among us that music grows in the woods. It is there we always find it."—"And do you go to the woods in quest of it?"—"Every year. Petty musicians do not go thither; they catch by ear whatever they hear on the roads and repeat it as well as they can. But to get the true account one must go and listen to the

productions to record; for it produces them as it cultivates them, without pausing for repose; and it creates incessantly, as nature creates, and from which he draws his inspiration.

Consuelo's heart abounded with all that candor, that poetic taste and highly wrought sensibility, which are essential to the comprehension and ardent love of popular music. In that point she was a great artiste; and the learned theories which she had fathomed had detracted in nothing from her genius of that freshness and sweetness which constitute the treasure of inspiration and the youth of the soul. She had often told Anzoletto, without letting the Porpora know it, that she loved some of the barcarolles of the fishermen of the Adriatic better than all the science of *Padre Martini* and of *Maestro Durante*. The boleros and canticles of her mother had been to her the sources of her poetic life, whence she never was wearied of drawing even to their depth her beloved recollections. What impression, then, ought not the musical genius of Bohemia to have produced on her, the inspiration, a pastoral and warrior, and fanatical people, grave and gentle in the midst of the most puissant elements of energy and activity. Albert played this music with a rare comprehension of the national spirit, and of the energetic and pious sentiment which had given it birth. He added to it, in his improvisation, the deep melancholy and piercing regret which slavery had impressed on his own personal character, and on that of his people; and that mixture of bravery and sadness, of enthusiasm and debasement, those hymns of gratitude blended with moans of distress, were the most perfect and deepest expositions of the feelings of unhappy Bohemia of unhappy Albert.

It has been truly said that the object of music is the awakening of emotions. No other art so sublimely can arouse human sentiments in the inmost heart of man. No other art can paint to the eyes of the soul the splendors of nature, the delights of contemplation, the character of nations, the tumult of their passions, and the languor of their sufferings, as music can. Regret, hope, terror, meditation, consternation, enthusiasm, faith, doubt, glory, tranquillity, all these and

woodcutters of the Bourbonnais."—"And how do they get it?"—"It comes to them while walking in the woods, while returning to their houses at night, while reposing from their toils on Sunday."—"And do you compose?"—"A little, but very rarely; and what I do is worth little or nothing. One must be born in the woods to compose, and I am from the plains. There is no one superior to myself in the accent, but as to invention, we know nothing about it, and it is better for us not to attempt it."

I tried to get him to explain what he meant by the accent. He could not, however, make any hand of it. Perhaps because he understood it too well himself, and thought me incapable of understanding. He was young, grave, and dark-complexioned as a Calabrian Pifferaso, he travelled from village fete to village fete, playing all day, and slept but once in three nights, because he had to travel from eighteen to twenty-four miles before sunrise, in order to arrive at his next scene of operations. But he seemed all the better for it—drank measures of wine sufficient to fuddle an ox, and never complained, like Sir Walter Scott's Trumpeter, of having lost his wind. The more he drank, the graver and the prouder he became. He played admirably, and had good reason to be proud of his accent. We observed that his playing was a perpetual modification of each theme. It was impossible to write a single one of these themes without taking a notation for every one of fifty various versions. In this probably lay his merit and his art. His replies to my questions gave me a clue, I believe, to the true etymology of the word *bourree*, which is the term they give to their provincial dances. *Bourree* is the usual name for a faggot, and the woodchoppers of the Bourbonnais have given that name to their musical compositions, even as Master Adam gave that of *Chivvies* to his pastoral compositions.

more are given to us and taken from us by music, at the suggestion of her genius, and according to the bent of our own. She even creates the aspect of realities, and without falling into the childish pursuit of mere effects of sound, or into a narrow imitation of real noises, she makes us behold, through a vaporous veil, which aggrandizes and renders divine all that is seen through it, the exterior objects whither she transports our imaginations. Some chaunts will cause the gigantic phantoms of antique cathedrals to rise before our eyes, at the same time that they will give us to penetrate into the inmost thoughts of the people who built them, and prostrated themselves within their walls in order to give utterance to their religious hymns. To him who knows to express powerfully and artlessly the music of divers peoples, and to him who knows to listen to it as it should be listened to, it will not need to encircle the world, to visit the different nations, to examine their monuments, to read their books, to traverse their upland plains, their mountains, their gardens, or their deserts. A Jewish chaunt, well given, sets us in the interior of the synagogue, and as every true Scottish air contains all Scotland, so is all Spain to be found in a true Spanish air. Thus, I have often been in Poland, in Germany, at Naples, in Ireland, in the Indies, and thus I know those men and those countries better than if I had examined them for so many years. It required but an instant to transport me to them, and to make me live with all that life which gives them animation. It was the essence of that life which I assimilated to myself under the fascination of the music.

By degrees Consuelo ceased to listen, ceased even to hear Albert's violin. Her whole soul was attentive; and her senses, closed up against the reception of direct impressions, were awakened in another world, as if to guide her very being through unknown realms, peopled with new existences. She saw the spectres of the olden heroes of Bohemia moving to and fro in a strange chaos, at once horrible and magnificent; she heard the funereal tolling of the convent bells, when the dreadful Taborites rushed down from the summits of their fortified mountains, emaciated, half-naked, fierce and gory. Then she saw the angels of death assembled among the clouds with the sword and the chalice in their hands. Suspended in serried bands above the heads of prevaricating pontiffs, she saw them pour out on the accursed land the cup of divine wrath. She fancied she could hear the flapping of their heavy wings, and the dripping of the blood of the Redeemer in heavy gout behind them, extinguishing the conflagration enkindled by their fury. At one time, it was a night of dread and darkness, through which she could hear the groans and the death-rattle of the trunks abandoned on the battle-field. At another, it was a scorching day, the heat of which she dared not encounter, through which she saw the terrible blind chief rush by like the thunderbolt, in his scythed car, with his open casque, his rusty corselet, and the gory bandage covering his eyeless sockets. The temples of their own accord flew open to his coming; the monks fled into the entrails of the earth, carrying away and concealing their treasures and their relics in the skirts of their garments. Then the conquerors brought forward emaciated old men, beggars, covered with sores like Lazarus; madmen ran up to meet them, chanting and gibbering like Zdenko, executioners polluted with black gore; young children with pure hands and angelic faces; warrior-women carrying stacks of pikes and resinous torches, all took their seats about a table; and an angel

radiant and beautiful as those whom Albert Durer has painted in his composition of the Apocalypse, offered to their parched lips the wooden goblet, the chalice of pardon, of restoration, and of holy equality.

This angel reappeared in all the visions which at that time passed before the eyes of Consuelo. As she looked at him earnestly, she recognised him for Satan, the most beautiful of the immortals after the Father, the saddest after the Saviour, the proudest among the proud. He dragged after his steps the chains he had broken; and his bab-wings, all soiled and drooping, gave token of the sufferings and the captivity he had undergone. He smiled mournfully upon the crime-polluted men, and pressed the little children to his heart.

On a sudden, it seemed to Consuelo that Albert's violin was speaking, and that it spoke with the voice of Satan. "No," it said, "my brother Christ loved you not better than I love you. It is time that you should know me, and that in lieu of calling me the enemy of the human race, you recover in me the friend who has aided you through the great struggle. I am not the demon. I am the archangel of legitimate resolution, and the patron of grand conflicts. Like Christ, I am the friend of the poor man, of the weak, and of him that is oppressed. When he promised you the sign of God upon the earth—when he announced to you his return among you, he meant to say that, after having undergone persecution, you should be recompensed, by conquering liberty and happiness with me and with himself. It is together that we were to return, and it is together that we do return, so united one to the other, that we are no longer two, but one. It is he, the divine principle, the God of the Spirit, who descended into the darkness into which ignorance had cast you, and where I underwent, in the flames of passion and indignation, the same torments which the Scribes and Pharisees of all ages caused him to endure upon his cross. Lo! I am here with you forever, my children; for he has broken my chains—he has extinguished my funeral pyre—he has reconciled me to God and to you. And henceforth craft and terror will no longer be the lawful inheritance of the weak, but independence and self-will. It is he—it is Jesus, who is the merciful, the tender, and the just. I am just also, but I am strong, warlike, stern, and persistent. O people! dost thou not recognize him who hath spoken to thee in the secrecy of thy heart, since thou didst first exist, and who in all thy troubles hath consoled thee, saying, 'Seek for pleasure. Renounce it not. Happiness is thy due—demand it, and thou shalt have it. Dost thou not see on my brow all thy sufferings, and on my wounded limbs the scars of the fetters which thou hast borne? Drink of the chalice which I offer thee. Therein thou wilt find my tears, blended with thine and with those of Christ; thou wilt taste them as burning and as salubrious as those which he shed.'"

That hallucination filled the heart of Consuelo with grief and pity blended. She fancied she could see and hear the disinherited angel weeping and groaning beside her. She saw him pale but beautiful, with his long tresses dishevelled about his thunderstricken brow but still proud, still gazing up to heaven. She admired him, while she yet shuddered through the odd habit of fearing him; and yet she loved him with that pious and fraternal love which is inspired by the sight of puissance in suffering. It seemed to her that from the midst of the Communion of the Bohemian fathers, it was she that he addressed; that he addressed her with gentle reproaches for her dis-

trust and terror; and that he attracted her toward him by a glance of magnetic influence, which she had not the power to resist. Fascinated, without the power to restrain herself, she arose, she darted toward him with extended arms and trembling knees. Albert dropped his violin, which gave forth a plaintive sound as it fell, and received the girl in his arms, uttering a cry of surprise and delight. It was he to whom Consuelo had been listening, and at whom she had been looking, while she was pondering upon the rebellious angel. It was his face, similar to that which she had conjured up to herself, which had attracted and subjugated her; it was his heart against which she had pressed herself, saying in a stifled voice—"To thee! to thee, angel of sorrow! to thee, and to thy God for ever."

But scarcely had Albert's trembling lips touched her own, before she felt a cold and thrilling pain, chill by turns, and by turns enkindle her breast and her brain. Awakened suddenly from her illusion, she experienced so violent a shock throughout the whole of her frame that she thought herself at the point of death, and tearing herself away from the arms of the count she fell against the bones of the altar, a portion of which gave way with her weight with a horrible noise. As she felt herself covered with these remnants of the human frame, and as she saw Albert, whom she had just clasped in her arms and rendered in some degree the master of her soul and of her liberty in a moment of frenzied excitement, she underwent a pang of terror and anguish so horrible that she hid her face in her dishevelled hair crying in a voice interrupted by sobs,—“Hence! Hence! in the name of heaven, give me light and air. Oh, my God! take me from this sepulchre and restore me to the light of day.”

Albert seeing her grow pale and toss her head, darted toward her, and endeavored to take her in his arms, in order to carry her out of the cavern; but in her terror she did not understand him, and recovering herself with an effort from her fall, she took flight toward the further end of the cavern, recklessly and without taking heed of any obstacles, or of the sinuous channels of the stream which crossed and recrossed before her footsteps, and which in several places were very dangerous. “In God's name,” Albert exclaimed as she fled, “not here—not this way—stop! stop! death is before your feet, wait until I come!”

But his outcries only added to Consuelo's fears. She leaped the rivulet twice with bounds as active as though a fawn, and without the slightest knowledge of what she was doing. At length she struck her foot in a dark spot planted with cypress trees, against an eminence of the soil, and fell with her hands outstretched before her, upon a piece of fresh lately dug ground.

The slight shock altered the disposition of her nerves. A sort of stupefaction succeeded to her apprehensions, and panting, overpowered, and having no longer the lightest recollection of what had affected her, she let the count overtake her and draw near to her side. He had rushed away in pursuit of her, and had the presence of mind to snatch up in haste, even as he ran by, one of the torches which were fixed among the rocks, in order that he might at least have the power of giving her light among the windings of the rivulet, in case he should not overtake her, until she had reached a portion of it, which he knew to be deep, and toward which she appeared to be making her way.

Astonished and half stunned by motions so sudden and so contrary

In their effect, the young man did not presume either to address or to lift her from the ground. She had seated herself on the mound of earth over which she had stumbled, and like himself was too timid to say a word to him. Confused and shy, she sat gazing mechanically on the ground through her lowered eyelids before the spot where she was seated. Suddenly she observed that the mound whereon she sat had the *shape* and dimensions of a tomb, and that she was actually seated on a grave, which had been but recently filled up, and which was strewn with cypress boughs scarcely yet withered, and flowers not quite faded. She started to her feet in haste, and in a new fit of terror which she could not subdue, exclaimed, "Oh, Albert, whom have you buried here?"

"I have buried here," replied Albert, unable to conceal an emotion of anguish, "that which the world contained the most dear to me before I made your acquaintance. If it was a sacrilege, inasmuch as I committed it in the idea that I was fulfilling a sacred duty, and at a moment when I was almost delirious, God will pardon me for it. I will tell you in some future time whose body it is that rests here. But at this moment your feelings are too much excited to bear the recital, and you want to be once more in the open air. Come, Consuelo, let us leave this spot in which, within a single moment, you have made me the happiest and the most unhappy of men."

"Oh yes," she replied, "let us go hence. I know not what exhalations arise here from the bosom of the ground, but I feel that I am dying of them, and that my reason is forsaking me."

They issued forth together, without exchanging a word farther. Albert walked in front, stopping and lowering his torch at every stone they encountered, in order that his companion might see and avoid it. But when he was about to open the door of the cell a recollection far removed, as it would seem, from the bent of her mind at that moment, but which was connected with her artistical propensities, was awakened in the mind of Consuelo.

"Albert," said she, "you have forgotten your violin, near the spring. That wonderful instrument, which aroused in me emotions of which until this day I have been ignorant, shall never with my consent be delivered up to certain destruction in that humid place."

Albert made a gesture which was intended to convey to her that there was now nothing on earth with the exception of herself which was of any value in his eyes. But she persisted, saying, "It has caused me much pain, and yet——"

"If it has only given you pain," he replied bitterly, "let it perish. I will never touch it again while I live. Oh! I care not how soon it is ruined."

"I should speak falsely were I to say so," answered Consuelo, recovering her feelings of respect toward the musical genius of the count. "The emotion was greater than I could bear, and enchantment was turned to agony. Go, my friend, bring it thence. I will replace it with my own hands in its casket, until I recover courage to bring it forth, replace it in your hands, and listen to it once again."

Consuelo was touched by the expression of gratitude which the count's features assumed as he received that permission to hope. He returned into the cavern in order to obey her, and thus left to herself for a few minutes, she began to reproach herself with her weak terrors and her groundless though horrible suspicions. She recollected trembling and blushing as it recurred to her, how in that fit of feverish

delirium she had cast herself into his arms; but she could not help admiring the modest and chaste timidity of that man who adored her, and who yet had not availed himself of that opportunity to address her with a single word of love. The sorrow which she observed in all his features, the languid and disheartened demeanor which he bore, told her that he had conceived no presumptuous hope either for the present or the future. She gave him credit for so much delicacy of heart, and determined to soften by kinder words than she had yet used, the bitterness of the farewell which she was about to take of him on their leaving the cavern.

But the recollection of Zdenko seemed to pursue like a vengeful phantom to the very last, and to accuse Albert in spite even of herself.

As she drew near to the door her eyes fell on an inscription in Bohemian, the whole of which with the exception of a single word, she easily understood, inasmuch as she knew it by heart. A hand, which could be no other than that of Zdenko, had traced on the black and gloomy portals these words in chalk—"May He who has been wronged grant thee—"

What followed was incomprehensible to Consuelo, and that circumstance caused her acute uneasiness. Albert returned and replaced his violin in the case, without her having the power to assist him as she had promised to do. She again felt all the impatience to quit the cavern which she had experienced at first. When he turned the key in the rusty lock, she could not refrain from laying her finger on the mysterious word, and turning a glance of interrogation upon him.

"That signifies," replied Albert, answering her look with a sort of strange calmness, "May the Angel, who has ever been misunderstood, the friend of the unhappy, he, Consuelo, of whom we spoke but now."

"Yes, Satan, I know that; and the rest—?"

"May Satan, I say, grant thee pardon!"

"Pardon for what?" she asked, turning pale as she spoke.

"If suffering deserves pardon," answered the count with melancholy calmness, "I have a long prayer to offer."

They entered the gallery, and did not again break silence until they had reached the people's cavern. But when the light of day from without began to fall with its bluish tints on the face of the count, Consuelo saw that two streams of tears were flowing silently down his cheeks. She was deeply affected, and when he drew nigh with a timid air to carry her across the outlet of the stream, she preferred wetting her feet in that brackish water to allowing him to lift her in his arms. She excused herself on the ground of the languor and weariness which he seemed to experience, and was already on the point of dipping her slipper in the mud when Albert said, extinguishing the torch as he spoke—

"Fare you well, then, Consuelo. I see by the aversion you manifest toward me that I must return into everlasting night; and like a ghost, evoked by you for one brief moment, return to my tomb, having succeeded in terrifying you only."

"No. Your life belongs to me," cried Consuelo, turning round and staying him. "You swore to me that you would never re-enter that cavern except in my company, and you have no right to take back your oath."

"And wherefore would you impose the burthen of human life on the mere phantom of a man. He who is alone but the shadow of a

mortal, and he who is loved of none, is alone everywhere, and with all men."

"Albert, Albert, you rend my heart. Come, carry me forth. fancy, that in the full light of day, I shall clearly perceive my own destinies."

CHAPTER LVI.

ALBERT obeyed her; and when they had begun to make their way downward from the base of the Schreckenstein into the lower vallies, Consuelo indeed felt that the agitation she had experienced was passing away. "Pardon me," she said, "pardon me for the pain I have given you;" as she leaned gently on his arm and walked forward. "It is very certain I myself was attacked by a fit of frenzy in the cavern."

"Why recall it to your mind, Consuelo? I should never have spoken of it, not I. I well know that you would fain efface it from your memory. I must also endeavor to forget it."

"My friend, I do not desire to forget it, but to ask your pardon for it. If I were to tell you the strange vision which came over me as I listened to your Bohemian airs, you would see that I was indeed out of my senses when I gave you such a shock of surprise and alarm. You cannot believe that I wished to disturb your reason and your peace of mind for any pleasure. Oh, God! Heaven is my witness, that even now I would gladly give my life for you."

"I know that you place no inestimable value on life, Consuelo. And I know that I should cling to life with the utmost avidity, if—"

"If—what? Proceed."

"If I were loved, as I love."

"Albert, I love you as much as it is permitted me to love. I should love you, doubtless, as you deserve to be loved, if—"

"If—what? It is your turn now to proceed."

"If insurmountable obstacles did not render it a crime in me to do so."

"And what are these obstacles? I seek for them in vain as they exist around you. I can find them only in the recesses of your own heart—in your recollections—where they doubtless have a real being."

"Speak not of my recollections. They are detestable to me; and far rather would I die than live again the years that are passed by. But your rank in the world, your fortune, the opposition and indignation of your parents,—where do you suppose I can find courage to face all that? I possess nothing in the world but my pride and my disinterestedness; and what would remain to me, were I to sacrifice these?"

"My love would remain to you, and your own also, if you loved me. I feel that this is not so; and I will but ask of you a little pity. How can it be that you should feel humiliated by granting me a little happiness as it were an alms? Which of us is it that would so fall prostrate before the knees of the other? In what respect should my fortune degrade you? Could we not speedily distribute it among the poor, if it should prove as wearisome to you as it does to me? Do

you not believe that I have long since resolved to employ it, as it should seem good to my tastes, or my ideas of right; in other words, to rid myself of it, as soon as the death of my father shall add the pain of inheriting wealth to the pain of separation? What then? Do you fear to be rich? Lo! I have vowed myself to poverty. Do you fear to be ennobled by my name? My name is an assumed one, and my true name is proscribed. I will never re-assume it. To do so would be to injure the memory of my father. But in the obscurity in which I shall bury myself, no one shall be dazzled by it, I swear to you; and you will not have the power to reproach me with it. To conclude. As to the opposition of my parents—oh! if there were no obstacle but that—only tell me that there is no other, and you shall see the result.”

“It is the greatest of them all—the only one which all my devotion, all my gratitude to you, would not allow me to conquer.”

“You are deceiving me, Consuelo. Swear that this is the only obstacle—you dare not swear that you are not deceiving me.”

Consuelo hesitated. She had never told a falsehood; and yet she now desired to make reparation to her friend for the pain she had given him—him who had saved her life, and watched over her during several months with all the anxiety of a tender and intelligent mother. She flattered herself that she was taking away the sting of her refusal by framing obstacles, which she did, in truth, believe to be insurmountable. But Albert’s reiterated questions confused her, and her own heart was a labyrinth, in the mazes of which she actually lost her way; for she could not say with certainty whether she loved or hated this strange man, toward whom a potent and mysterious sympathy had impelled her, while an invincible apprehension, and something that closely resembled aversion, made her tremble even now at the idea of an engagement.

It seemed to her, at that moment, that she actually hated Anzoletto. Could it be otherwise, when she compared him with his brutal selfishness, his abject ambition, his cowardice, and his perfidy; with this Albert, so generous, so humane, so pure, and so greatly endowed with all the loftiest and most romantic virtues? The only cloud which could overshadow her judgment concerning this parallel, was the attempt on the life of Zdenko, with which she could not help charging him. And yet was not this very suspicion a disease of her imagination, a moral nightmare which the explanation of a moment might suffice to set at rest? She resolved to make the experiment, and pretending to be absent and not to have understood Albert’s last question, “My God!” she cried, as she stopped to gaze at a peasant who was passing by at some distance, “I thought I saw Zdenko.”

Albert shuddered, dropped Consuelo’s arm, which he had been holding, and advanced a few paces; then he stopped abruptly and turned back. “How strange an error is this, Consuelo?—That man has not a single feature of resemblance to——” he could not bring himself to utter the name of Zdenko, and his face was entirely changed as he spoke.

“You nevertheless thought it was he yourself, an instant ago,” said Consuelo, who was watching him keenly.

“I am extremely short-sighted, and I ought to have remembered that such a meeting were impossible.”

“Impossible! Is Zdenko, then, very far distant hence?”

“Sufficiently distant, that you have no more need to dread his mad-
ness.”

"Can you not explain to me the origin of his sudden hatred to me, after the evidences of sympathy which he gave me at first?"

"I told you that it is the consequence of a dream that he had on the eve of your descent into the cavern. He saw you in his dream following me to the altar, at which you consented, as he imagined, to plight me your faith, and there you began to sing our old Bohemian hymns in a voice so powerful that it made the whole church tremble. Then while you were singing, he saw me turn pale, and sink through the pavement of the church, until I was wholly swallowed up, and lay dead in the sepulchre of my ancestors. Then he saw you hastily throw off your bridal wreath, push a flagstone with your foot so that it instantly covered me, and then dance upon that funereal slab, singing incomprehensible words in an unknown tongue, with all the symptoms of the most immoderate and cruel joy. Full of frenzy, he threw himself upon you, but you had already vanished away in smoke, and he awoke bathed in sweat and frantic with passion. He even awoke me, for his cries and imprecations made the whole vault of the cell ring and re-echo. I had much trouble in inducing him to relate his dream to me, and yet greater difficulty in preventing him from believing that he could perceive in it the real course of my future destiny. It was by no means an easy task to convince him; for I was myself under the influence of a sort of sickly excitement of my spirits, and I had never before attempted to dissuade him from reposing faith in his dreams and visions. Nevertheless, I thought that I had succeeded; for during the day which followed that wild and perturbed night, he seemed to retain no recollection of it, for he made no allusion to it; and when I requested him to go and speak with you of me, he made no objection. He thought you had never even entertained an idea of coming to seek me where I then was, and that there was no possibility of doing so, nor did his delirium break forth again until he saw you undertake it. At least he did not allow me to discover his hatred toward you until he met us together on our return through the subterranean galleries. Then he told me laconically, in the Bohemian language, his intention and firm determination to deliver me from you—for it is so that he expressed himself—and to destroy you the first time he should meet you alone; because you were the scourge of my life, and because he could read my death written in your eyes. Pardon me for repeating these last outpourings of his madness, and understand now wherefore it was necessary for me to remove him, both from you and myself. Let us speak of this no more, I implore you; it is too painful a subject of conversation. I loved Zdenko as a second self. His madness had assimilated itself and identified itself with my own, to such a degree that our thoughts, our visions, nay, but even our own physical sufferings had become spontaneously the same. He was, moreover, simpler and more artless, and by so much more a poet than myself; his temperament was more equable, and the visions which I beheld hideous and menacing, became gentle and mournful, as apprehended by the organization of his mind, tenderer, and more serene than mine. The great difference between us was the irregular occurrence of my seizures, and the continuous character of his frenzy. While I was at one time a prey to fierce delirium, or a cold and astounded spectator of my own misery, he lived in a sort of continual dream, during which all external objects assumed a symbolical form, and this species of hallucination was always so gentle and affectionate, that in my lucid intervals—which

were of a surety the most painful hours of my life—I felt an actual need of the peaceful and ingenuous aberrations of Zdenko to reanimate me and reconcile me to life.”

“Oh, my friend,” said Consuelo, “you ought to hate me, and I hate myself for having deprived you of a friend so dear and so devoted. But has not his exile lasted long enough? By this time may he not be cured of a mere passing fit of violence, which—”

“He is cured of it *probably*,” interrupted Albert, with a strange and bitter smile.

“Well then,” continued Consuelo, who was anxious to divest herself of the idea of his death, “Why do you not recall him? I assure you, I shall see him again without any apprehension, and together we shall easily bring him to lay aside his prejudices against me.”

“Do not talk thus, Consuelo,” said Albert, dejectedly. “His return is henceforth impossible. I have sacrificed my best friend, him who was my companion, my attendant, my support, my artless, ignorant, and obedient child, my solicitous and laborious mother, the purveyor of all my wants, of all my innocent and melancholy pleasures—him who defended me against myself during my fits of despair, and who employed both strength and stratagem to prevent me from quitting my cell, when he saw me incapable of maintaining my own dignity, and my own course of life in the world of the living, and in the society of other men. I made that sacrifice without retrospect and without remorse, because it was my duty so to do. Because in encountering the perils of the cavern, in restoring to my reason and the perception of my duties, you were become more precious, more sacred to me than Zdenko himself.”

“This is an error—this is almost a blasphemy, Albert! The courage of one moment must not be compared with the devotion of a life.”

“Do not imagine that a selfish and savage passion prevailed with me to act as I have acted. I should have well known how to stifle such a passion in my own breast, and to have locked myself up in my cavern with Zdenko, rather than break the heart and destroy the life of the best of men. But the voice of God had spoken to me distinctly. I had resisted the fascination which was overpowering me. I had avoided you; I had determined to abstain from seeing you, so long as the dreams and presentiments, which led me to hope that in you I should find the angel of my safety, should not be fulfilled, until the frenzy into which a lying dream cast Zdenko, disturbing the whole tenor of his pious and gentle organization, he shared all my aspirations, all my fears, all my hopes, all my religious desires concerning you. The unhappy being misconceived you on the very day in which you were revealing yourself. The celestial light which had always illuminated the mysterious regions of his spirit was suddenly extinguished, and God condemned him by sending upon him the spirit of frenzy and of fury. It was my duty, therefore, also to abandon him; for you had appeared to me more wrapped in a blaze of glory; you had descended toward me, upborne on wings, as if a prodigy, and you had the command of words, for the unsealing of my eyes, which your calm intellect and artistical education rendered it impossible for you to have studied or prepared. Pity and charity inspired you, and under their miraculous influence you spoke to me words, which it was necessary for me to comprehend, in order to conceive and understand the truth of human life.”

"And what did I ever speak to you so forcible and so wise? Of a truth, Albert, I have no idea of it."

"Nor I, myself. But it seemed to me that God himself dwelt in the sound of your voice and in the serenity of your gaze. By your side I understood in one instant, all that, if alone, I should never have comprehended in my whole life. I knew before that time that my life was an expiation, martyrdom, and I sought out the accomplishment of my destiny in darkness, in solitude, in tears, in indignation, in study, in asceticism, in macerations. You presented to my sight a different life, a different martyrdom; one of patience, of gentleness, of endurance, of devotion. The duties which you explained to me so artlessly and simply, beginning with those which I owed my family, had all been forgotten by me; and my family, in the excess of its goodness, had suffered me to overlook my own crimes. I have repaired them, thanks to you; and from the first day of my doing so, I knew, by the calmness which reigned within me, that I had done all that God required at my hands for the present. I know that I have not done all; but I expect fresh revelations from God as to the remainder of my existence; but I have now all confidence, since I have discovered the oracle which I can henceforth consult. It is you, Consuelo! Providence has given you power over me, and I will not revolt against His decrees, by endeavoring to escape from it. I ought not then to hesitate an instant between the superior power invested with the capacity of regenerating me, and the poor passive creature, who up to that time had only shared my distresses and bowed before my storms of frenzy."

"You speak of Zdenko? But how know you that God has not predestined me to cure him also? You must have seen that I had already gained some power over him, since I succeeded in convincing him by a single word, when his hand was already raised to kill me."

"O my God! it is true. I have broken faith; I was afraid; I knew the oaths of Zdenko. He had sworn to me, contrary to my wishes, to live for me alone, and he kept his oath ever since I have been alive, in my absence just as before, and since my return. When he swore that he would *destroy* you, I did not once conceive that it was possible to prevent him from carrying out his resolution, and I took the plan of offending him, of banishing him, of breaking his spirit, and of *destroying* him."

"Of *destroying* him—my God! What does that word signify in your mouth, Albert? Where, then, is Zdenko?"

"You ask me, as God asked Cain, 'What hast thou done with thy brother?'"

"Oh! heaven! heaven! you have not *killed* him, Albert!" Consuelo, as she suffered that terrible word to escape her lips, clung with tenacious energy to Albert's arm, and gazed at him with terror, mingled with painful pity. She recoiled from the cold and haughty aspect which that pale face assumed, in the expression of which agony seemed to be actually petrified.

"I have not *killed* him," he made answer, "and yet I have, of a surety, taken his life from him. Will you dare to impute it to me as a crime; you for whom I would perhaps kill my father in the same manner; you for whom I would brave all remorse, and break all the dearest ties, all the most cherished realities? If I have preferred the regret and repentance which devour me, to the fear of seeing you assassinated by a madman, have you so little pity in your heart as to

held that remorse perpetually up to my eyes, and to reproach me with the greatest sacrifice I have ever been enabled to make to you? Ah, you also! you also have your moments of cruelty. Cruelty cannot be extinguished in the heart of any single being who is one of the human race."

There was so much solemnity in this reproach, which was the first that Albert ever had dared to make to Consuelo, that she was deeply alarmed, and felt—more keenly than it had ever befallen her to feel it before—how great was the terror with which he inspired her. A sort of humiliation which, though, perhaps, childish, is nevertheless inherent in the heart of woman, succeeded to the sweet sense of pride against which she had vainly striven, as she heard Albert describe the passionate veneration with which she had inspired him. She felt herself debased, and misunderstood then, beyond a doubt; for she had not sought to penetrate his secret without a direct intention of doing so, or at least without a desire of responding to his love, should he succeed in justifying himself. At the same time, she saw that she was herself the guilty in the eyes of her lover; for if he had killed Zdenko, the only person in the world who had no right to condemn him irrevocably for the deed, was she whose life had required, at the hands of the unhappy Albert, the sacrifice of another life, which under other circumstances, would have been infinitely precious to him.

Consuelo had not a word to reply. She would fain have spoken of some other topic, but her tears cut short her speech. Albert, now repentant, would have humiliated himself in his turn, but she implored him to speak no more on a subject so appalling to his spirit, and promised him in a sort of bitter satisfaction never again to pronounce a name which awakened in herself no less than in him, emotions so fearful. The rest of their walk was darkened by constraint and piercing anguish. They vainly endeavored to hit upon some other topic. Consuelo knew neither what she was saying nor to what she was listening. Albert, on the contrary, appeared calm as Abraham or Brutus after the performance of the sacrifices enforced upon them by stern destinies. That mournful tranquillity, deeply rooted, and weighing upon the breast with something of the weight of madness, was not without some resemblance to a lingering remnant of that disease, and Consuelo could only justify her friend to her own mind by remembering that he was a madman. If in an open conflict of strength against strength he had slain his adversary, in an attempt to save her, she would have discovered in the deed only a newer cause for gratitude, perhaps for admiration of his vigor and courage. But this mysterious murder, committed, doubtless, amid the darkness of the cavern; this tomb hollowed out in the very place of holy prayer; and this ferocious silence after an incident so horrible; this stoical fanaticism with which he had dared to lead her into the cavern, and there to deliver himself up to the charms and ecstasies of music, all this was too horrible, and Consuelo felt that the love of such a man could never penetrate her heart. Then she began to ask herself at what time he could have committed this murder. "I have never seen," she said to herself, "during these three months, so deep a frown on his forehead that I should attribute it to remorse! and yet had he not one day some drops of blood on his hand, when I would have offered mine to him. Oh! horror! horror! He must be either of ice or marble, or he must love me with ferocity; and I—I

who desired to be the object of an illimitable passion—I, who regretted that I had been but so feebly loved—I then have received from heaven such a love as this for a compensation.”

Then she began once more to consider at what moment Albert could have performed his horrible sacrifice, and she began to imagine that it must have been during the time when her terrible malady did not permit her to take the slightest notice of external events. Then again when she called to mind the delicate and tender attentions which Albert had lavished on her, she could not reconcile the two several phases of this man’s character, who was at once so different from himself and from other men.

Absorbed in these painful musings, she received the flowers which Albert, knowing that she was very fond of them, was wont to gather for her as they walked along; but it was with a trembling hand and an abstracted mind that she received them. She did not even think to leave him so as to enter the chateau alone, and suffer it to appear that they had not been so together tête-à-tête. Whether it so happened that Albert thought of it no more than she, or that he was determined to carry on his deception with his family no longer, he did not remind her of it, so that at the entrance of the chateau, they found themselves face to face with the canoness. Consuelo, and probably Albert also, now for the first time saw the features of this woman, whose goodness of heart, for the most part, concealed her ugliness, despite her leanness and deformity, kindled by anger and disdain.

“It is, indeed, time that you should return home, Mademoiselle,” said she to La Porporina, in tones trembling and broken with agitation. “We were greatly alarmed concerning Count Albert. His father, who has not chosen to breakfast without him, was anxious to have a conversation with him this morning, which you have thought proper to forget. And as regards yourself, there is a slight young man in the drawing-room, who calls himself your brother, and who is waiting for you with more impatience than politeness.”

And with these singular words, poor Wenceslawa, alarmed at her own courage, turned her back abruptly, and ran to her room, where she wept and coughed for above an hour.

CHAPTER LVII.

“My aunt is in a strange mood,” said Albert to Consuelo, as they ascended the steps leading to the terrace. “I ask your pardon in her behalf, dear lady; be sure that this very day she will change both her manners and language toward you.”

“My brother!” cried Consuelo, astonished at the message which had been delivered to her, and not hearing what the Count had said.

“I did not know that you had a brother,” said Albert, who had paid more attention to his aunt’s ill temper than to that event. “Undoubtedly I will be a pleasure to you to see him, dear Consuelo, and I am rejoiced—”

“Rejoice not, Monsieur Le Count,” said Consuelo, of whom a sad presentiment was rapidly taking possession. “Perhaps it is a great

calamity which is at this moment preparing for me, and I—" she stopped trembling and disturbed, for she had been on the point of asking his advice and protection, but she feared to connect herself with him too closely, and scarcely knowing whether to receive or to avoid one who introduced himself to her presence through the medium of a lie; she felt her limbs yielding under her, and turning very pale, clung to the balustrades on the last step of the terrace stair.

"Do you apprehend some painful intelligence from your family?" asked Albert, who was beginning to grow uneasy.

"I have no family," replied Consuelo, compelling herself to proceed. She was on the point of saying "I have no brother," but a vague apprehension prevented her from doing so. But as she crossed the dining-room, she heard the boot of the traveller creaking on the drawing-room carpet, as he walked to and fro impatiently. With an involuntary movement she drew nearer to the young count, and pressed his arm, entwining her own around it, as if to take refuge in his love from the sufferings whose approach she foresaw.

Albert, as he perceived the movement, felt all his mortal apprehensions awakening anew. "Do not go in without me," he whispered "I divine some presentiments which never have deceived me, that this brother is your enemy and mine. I am chilled to the heart; I am terrified; as if I were about to be compelled to hate some one."

Consuelo disengaged the arm which Albert held tightly clasped to his bosom. She trembled at the idea that he was about to conceive one of those singular notions, one of those implacable conclusions, of which the supposed death of Zdenko had given her so frightful an example. "Let us separate here," she said, speaking in German, for what was said could be heard in the adjoining room. "I have nothing to fear at this time, but if in future any peril should threaten me, count upon me, Albert, I will apply to you."

Albert yielded with visible reluctance. But, fearing to offend her delicacy, he did not dare to disobey her; still he could not resolve to leave the dining-room, and Consuelo, who understood his hesitation, closed the double doors of the drawing-room behind her, in order that he might neither hear or see what should pass therein.

Anzoletto, for it was he, as she had but too surely divined through his audacity, and too well recognised by the sound of his footsteps, had prepared himself to meet her impudently with a fraternal embrace on her entrance in the presence of witnesses. But when he saw her enter alone, pallid, indeed, but cold and stern, he lost all his courage, and cast himself stammering before her feet. He had no occasion to feign tenderness or joy, for he really felt the two sentiments on seeing her once again whom he had never ceased to love amid all his treasons. He burst into tears, and as she would not let him take her hands, he covered the skirts of her raiment with tears and kisses. Consuelo had not looked to find him thus. During four months she had thought of him continually as he had showed himself on the night of their rupture, bitter, ironical, despicable and hateful above all men. That very morning she had seen him pass by, with an insolent deportment and an air of recklessness which was all but impudent and now he was on his knees, humbled, repentant, bathed in tears, as in the stormiest days of their passionate reconciliations. Handsomer than ever, for his simple travelling costume, which, though rude, became him well; his fine features had gained a more masculine character, from the exposure to the weather on his road.

Panting like the dove which is already in the falcon's grasp, she was compelled to seat herself, and bury her face in her hands, in order to shield herself from the fascination of his gaze. This movement, which Anzoletto took for one of shame, encouraged him; and the return of evil thoughts soon destroyed the favorable impression made by his first transports. Anzoletto, when he fled from Venice, and from the mortifications he had experienced as the punishment of his faults, had but one idea, that, namely, of seeking his fortunes. But at the same time he had never abandoned either the desire or the hope of recovering his beloved Consuelo. Talents so dazzling as hers could not, he thought, long continue hidden, and in no place did he neglect to inquire for her, by inducing the inn-keepers, the guides, and such chance-travellers as he met, to enter into conversation. At Vienna he had become acquainted with many persons of distinction of his own country, to whom he confessed the outrageous blunder of which he had been guilty, and his flight from Venice. They had all advised him to go yet farther from Venice, and to wait patiently until Count Zustiniani should have either forgotten or pardoned his escapade, and promising to interest themselves in his behalf, had given him letters of recommendation to Prague, Dresden, and Berlin. As he passed before the Giant's Castle, Anzoletto had not thought of questioning his guide; but after an hour's rapid travelling, having checked his pace a little in order to permit his horses to recover their breath, he had resumed the conversation, asking him various questions concerning the country and its inhabitants. The guide had naturally spoken to him of the lords of Rudolstadt, of their mode of life, of Albert's extravagances, and of his madness, which was no longer a secret to anybody, especially since the hatred which Doctor Wetzeliuss had so earnestly sworn against him. The guide, however, had not failed, in order fully to complete his scandalous chronicles of the province, to tell him how Count Albert had put the cope-stone on all his extravagances, by refusing to marry his noble cousin, the beautiful Baroness Amelia, of Rudolstadt, having entangled himself with an adventuress who was merely good-looking, but with whom the whole world fell in love as soon as they heard her sing, on account of the exceeding beauty of her voice.

These two circumstances were so wonderfully applicable to Consuelo, that our traveller lost not a moment before enquiring her name, and as soon as he heard that she was called La Porporina, he no longer doubted the truth. He immediately retraced his steps, and after having hastily stricken out the title and pretext under which he might hope to introduce himself into a castle so well guarded, he proceeded to extract some farther reports of bad repute from his guide. The gossip of this man had led him to receive it as a certain fact that Consuelo was the young count's mistress, awaiting the time when she should become his wife; for she had bewitched, as he said, the whole family; and instead of sending her off, as she deserved, they paid her more attention, and lavished more cares upon her than they had ever done with the Baroness Amelia. This narrative excited Anzoletto yet more, if possible, than his real attachment to Consuelo. He had constantly sighed for the restoration of the life which she had rendered so delicious to him. He had long been thoroughly aware that in losing her advice and her directions, he had lost, or at the least, compromised, for many a day to come, his musical reputation; and more than all, he was still forcibly attracted to her by a love at once selfish

deep, and invincible. But to all this was added the vain-glorious temptation of disputing the possession of Consuelo with a rich and noble lover; of tearing her from a brilliant marriage, and causing it to be said that this girl, who was so nobly provided for, had preferred following his adventures to becoming a countess, and a chatelaine. He amused himself, therefore, with making his guide repeat that the Porporina reigned as absolute sovereign at Riesenbergh, and delighted himself with the puerile idea of leaving it for that man to tell thereafter to all the travellers whom he should guide, that a handsome youth, passing by accident, had ridden rough-shod into the inhospitable Castle of the Giants, and had but to COME, SEE AND CONQUER, in order, at the end of a few hours, or days, more or less, to carry off the pearl of songstresses from the very high, and very puissant lord, the Count of Rudolstadt.

At that idea he plunged his rowels into his horse's sides, and laughed until his guide believed that the madder of the two was not the Count Albert.

The canoness received him with distrust, but dared not actually eject him, on account of the hope she entertained that he might perhaps carry away with him his pretended sister. He learned of her that Consuelo was out walking, and was sulky at hearing it. Breakfast was served to him, and he questioned the servants; and one of them, who alone understood a few words of Italian, thought there could be no harm in telling him that he had seen the signora on the mountain with the young count. Anzoletto had feared that on their first meeting he should find Consuelo haughty and distant. He had said to himself that if as yet she were but the honorably betrothed of the eldest son of the family she would wear the proud bearing of one confident of her own position; but if she were already his mistress she would be less sure of her standing, and would tremble before an old friend who might have it in his power to disarrange all her plans. If innocent, her conquest would be the prouder feat: if she were already corrupted, it would be otherwise in that respect, but in neither case would there be any reason to despair.

Anzoletto was too shrewd not to discover the uneasiness and ill-humor with which the long excursion of Porporina and her nephew appeared to affect the Canoness, and, as he did not see Count Christian, it was an easy matter for him to disbelieve the guide, and to fancy that the family were indisposed and hostile to the union of the young Count with the adventurer, and that she would smile abashed in the presence of her first lover.

After awaiting her four weary hours, Anzoletto, who had the time for much consideration, and whose morals were not pure enough to augur well of such a circumstance, looked on it as certain that so long an interview between Consuelo and his rival, argued an intimacy without any limit. He was therefore the more daring, the more resolute in his determination to wait for her, without suffering himself to be repulsed; and after the first irresistible fit of tenderness, with which he was plunged by her first glance, he believed himself safe in daring all things so soon as he had seen that she was overcome, and that she sank conquered by the violence of her emotions upon the nearest chair. His tongue therefore speedily broke its bonds. He accused himself of all that had occurred, he humbled himself hypocritically, wept as much as he chose, related his remorse and his torments, painting both more romantically than the disgusting interludes

between them had allowed him really to feel them, and in conclusion implored her pardon, with all the eloquence of a Venetian and of a consummate actor.

Though at first she had been moved by the sound of his voice, and alarmed more by the sense of her own weakness, than at the strength of his seductions, Consuelo, who had no less than he reflected much during the last four months, soon recovered enough clearness of intellect to recognise in all these protestations, all this passionate eloquence, the same jargon to that she had heard fifty times during the latter days of their unhappy connection while at Venice. She was disgusted at hearing repeated the same old oaths, the same old prayers, as if nothing had occurred since those old quarrels at a day when she had so little understood the real odiousness of Anzoletto's conduct. Indignant alike at his audacity and at his pouring forth such elegant harangues, when nothing was in truth desirable but the silence of shame and the tears of repentance, she cut short all his fine declarations, by rising to her feet, and replying coldly: "Enough! enough! Anzoletto. I have long since pardoned you, and I have no longer an ill feeling toward you. Indignation has made way for pity, and forgetfulness of the wrongs you have done me has come with the forgetfulness of what I have suffered. I thank you for the good feeling which led you to interrupt your journey, in order to seek a reconciliation with me. Your pardon, as you see, had been granted beforehand; so now, fare you well, and do you proceed on your way."

"What, I! I leave you, I leave you again!" cried Anzoletto, now really alarmed. "No. Rather would I have you order me to kill myself outright. No: how can I resolve to live without you. I could not do it, Consuelo. I have endeavored, and I know that it is useless. Where you are not, to me there is nothing—all is void. My hateful ambition, my miserable vanity, to which I would in vain have sacrificed my love, are additions to my torture, and give me no longer even a momentary pleasure. Your image pursues me everywhere—the memory of our happiness so pure, so chaste, so delicious—and whither should I go to seek for another like unto you—is ever before my eyes, and all the fantasies with which I would surround myself now, cause me only the deepest disgust. Oh! Consuelo! call to mind our lonely Venetian nights, our boat, our stars, our interminable songs, your admirable lessons, our long thrilling kisses. Call to mind your little bed whereon I slept alone, while you were saying your rosary aloft on the terrace. Did not I love you then? Is it possible that a man who has ever respected you, even when you were asleep, and when shut up with you alone, should be held incapable of loving you? Say that I have been infamous in my conduct toward others, have I not been as an angel toward you? And God knows alone what it cost me. Oh! forget not all this! You, who declared that you loved me so well, you have forgotten all this! and I, who am an ungrateful wretch, a monster, a coward, I have been unable to forget, no not for a single instant; and I will not renounce my recollections, although you renounce them at once and without an effort. But you have never loved me, although you are an angel, and I have ever adored you, although I be a demon."

"It is possible," returned Consuelo, struck by the accent of truth with which he uttered these words, "that you do feel a sincere regret for that happiness which was tainted and destroyed by yourself alone. If so, it is a punishment which it is for you to accept humbly, and

which it is not for me to turn away from you. Happiness corrupted you, Anzoletto. It is necessary now, that punishment should purify you. Go, then, and remember me, if the bitterness of that remembrance be salutary to you. If not, forget me, as I forget you. I, who have no fault to expiate or to redress."

"Ah! you have a heart of steel," cried Anzoletto, surprised and offended by her incomprehensible calmness. "But do not imagine that you can thus drive me hence. It is possible that my arrival annoys, that my presence wearies you. I know well that you desire to sacrifice the memory of our love to rank and fortune. But it shall not be so. I have attached myself to you, and if I lose you, it shall not be without a struggle. I will recall the past to your memory, and I will do so in the presence of your new friends, if you desire it. I will repeat the oaths that you made by your dying mother's bedside, which you have renewed to me a hundred times upon her tomb, and in the churches, whither we used to go and kneel side by side among the crowds to listen to the fine music, and to speak in subdued whispers. I will recall to your mind, humbly kneeling upon my knees, things which you will not refuse to hear; and if you do refuse, woe to us twain. I will proclaim, before your new lover, things of which he has no suspicions. For they know nothing of you, not even that you have been an actress. Well; I will tell it then, and we will see whether the noble Count Albert will recover reason enough to dispute you with an actor, a friend, an equal, a betrothed, a lover! Ah! drive me not to despair, Consuelo, or soon—"

"Threats! At length then I find, and I recognise you, Anzoletto," cried the girl, now thoroughly indignant. "Ah, I prefer you thus; I thank you for having raised the mask. Yes, thanks to heaven! henceforth, I have neither regret for you, nor pity. I see all the gall that is in your heart, all the baseness in your character, all the hatred in your love. Go, satiate your spite. Thus, you will render me a service; but unless you are as deeply used to calumny as you are to insult, you can say nothing of me, which can call up a blush to my cheek."

As she spoke thus, she turned to the door, opened it, and was on the point of leaving the room, when she found herself face to face with Count Christian. At the mere sight of that venerable old man, who advanced toward him, after kissing Consuelo's hand with an air of mingled majesty and affability, Anzoletto, who was in the act of springing forward to retain the girl, willing or unwilling, returned intimidated, and lost the boldness of his demeanor.

CHAPTER LVIII

"DEAR SIGNORA," said the old count, "pardon me for not having given Monsieur, your brother, a better reception. I had given orders that I should not be interrupted this morning, because I was occupied with some unusual business; and I was not informed timely enough to receive a guest who must, both as regards myself and all my family be welcome in this house. Be assured, Monsieur," he added turning toward Anzoletto, "that it is with the greatest pleasure I see so near a

relation of our well-beloved Porporina. I beg you, therefore, to remain with us so long as it shall be agreeable to you. I presume that after so long a separation you must have many things to say one to the other; must feel much joy at finding yourselves again together. I hope therefore, that you will allow no foolish scruples to prevent you from taking time to the enjoyment of a happiness, which I myself share with you."

Contrary to his wont, the old Count Christian was speaking at his ease with a stranger; for long since his shyness had evaporated whenever he was in the company of the gentle Consuelo; and on this day in particular, his countenance seemed to be illuminated by a ray of life more brilliant than usual, like the rays which the sun pours abroad over the country at the hour of his setting. Anzoletto was as it were stupefied before that peculiar majesty with which uprightness and serenity of soul shed on the brow of a venerable old man. He knew well how to fear and cringe before nobles and lords, but he hated them all the while, and mocked them inwardly while he fawned upon them. He had found but too many objects for his scorn in the great world, among which he had lived so short a time. Never yet had he seen dignity so well maintained, and politeness so cordial, as that of the old Chatelaine of Riesenbergh. He was confused as he thanked him, and almost repented of having cheated him out of the almost fatherly reception which he had given him, by an act of imposture. He feared above all that Consuelo would expose him, and declare to the count that he was not her brother. He felt at the time that if she did so, he had it not in his power to play his part with effrontery, or even to aim at avenging himself upon her.

"I am penetrated by your goodness, Monsieur le Comte," said Consuelo, after a moment's reflection; "but my brother, who feels it as deeply as I do, cannot have the honor of partaking of it. Pressing business calls him to Prague, and he has but now bid me adieu."

"That is impossible," said the count. "You have seen one another but a moment."

"He lost several hours waiting for me," she replied, "and now his minutes are numbered. He well knows," she added, looking significantly at her pretended brother, "that he cannot stay here a minute longer."

The coldness with which she insisted on this, restored to Anzoletto all the hardihood of his character, and all the coolness of the part which he was playing. "Let whatever the devil will—I would say God will," (he corrected himself) "come of it, but I cannot leave my sister so speedily as she would have me, in her prudence and reason. I know no business which is worth a minute's happiness: and since Monseigneur permits me so generously, I gratefully accept his invitation. I will stay. My engagements at Prague will be fulfilled a little later in the day. That is all."

"This is talking like a vain boy," replied Consuelo, deeply annoyed. "These are matters of business in which honor should stand above all interests."

"It is talking like a brother," replied Anzoletto; "and you are always talking like a queen, my good little sister."

"It is talking like a good young man," added the old count, again offering his hand to Anzoletto. "I know no business that may not be deferred until the morrow. It is true that I have always been reproached for my indolence, but for my own part I have always found

worse consequences arise from rashness than from delay. For instance, my dear Porporina, for these two days, I might say these two weeks past, I have said a prayer to offer to you, and yet, I have put it off until now. I think that I have done well, and that the moment has arrived. Can you grant me to-day the hour's conversation which I was coming to ask of you, when I was informed of your brother's arrival? It seems to me that this fortunate circumstance has fallen out quite *apropos*, and perhaps he will not be out of place in the conference which I propose to you."

"I am always and at all hours at your lordship's commands," replied Consuelo. "As to my brother, he is a mere boy whom I do not, without special reason, associate in my personal affairs."

"I know that well," answered Anzoleto impudently: "but since Monseigneur thinks fit to authorize me, I have no need of any permission but his, to enter into this confidential interview."

"You will be so kind as to allow me to judge of what is fitting between me and yourself," replied Consuelo, haughtily. "Monsieur le Comte, I am ready to follow you into your apartment, and to listen to you with respect."

"You are very stern with this good young man, who looks so frank and good-humored," said the Count, smiling; and then turning to Anzoleto, he added, "Be not impatient, my son. Your turn will soon come. What I have to say to your sister can not be long concealed from you; and as you say, I trust that ere long she will permit me to take you into our confidence."

Anzoleto had the impertinence to reply to the frank gaiety of the old nobleman, by retaining his hand between both his own, as if he had wished to attach himself to him, and to surprise him of the secret from which Consuelo desired to exclude him.

He had not even the good taste to understand that he ought to leave the drawing-room, in order to spare the count the trouble of leaving it himself. But when he found himself once more alone, he stamped with rage, fearing that this young girl, who had now become entirely the mistress of herself, might disconcert all his plans, and cause him to be turned out of the house in spite of all his cleverness. He took it into his head, then, to glide out into the body of the house, and to go and listen at all the doors. He left the drawing-room with this intent, wandered for a few moments about the gardens, then ventured into the galleries, pretending, whenever he met any of the servants, to be admiring the fine architecture of the castle. But on three different occasions he observed a singularly grave person, dressed in black, pass by, whose attention he felt no particular inclination to call toward himself. This was Albert, who did not seem to remark him, but who at the same time never lost sight of him. Anzoleto, observing that he was taller than himself by a head, and noticing the remarkable beauty of his features, began to understand that in the madman of Riesenbergh he had a much more formidable rival than he had imagined. He determined, therefore, on returning to the drawing-room, where he tried his fine voice in that large area, running his fingers abruptly over the notes of the piano forte.

"My daughter," said Count Christian to Consuelo, after he had led her into his study and seated her in his great velvet arm-chair, fringed with velvet, while he sat on a folding chair by her side. "I have now to ask your pardon, and I scarcely know with what right I can do so, until you are aware of my intentions. May I flatter myself that my

grey hairs, my tender regard for you, and my friendship for the noble Porpora, your adopted father, may give you confidence enough in me, that you will consent unreservedly to open your heart to me?"

Affected, and at the same time a little alarmed by this preamble, Consuelo raised the old man's hand to her lips, and replied, earnestly:

"Yes, Monsieur le Comte, I respect and love you as if I had the honor to have had you for my father; and I can answer all your questions, so far as they concern myself, without fear or equivocation."

"I will ask no more of you, my dear daughter, and I thank you for the promise. Believe that I am as incapable of abusing it, as I believe you to be of breaking it."

"I believe you, Monsieur le Comte. Pray proceed."

"Well, my daughter," asked the old man, with an artless yet encouraging curiosity, "what is your name?"

"I have no name," replied Consuelo, without hesitation. "My mother had no other name than Rosmunda. At my birth I was called 'Mary of Consolation;' my father I never knew."

"But you know his name?"

"I do not, my lord. I never heard him even spoken of."

"Master Porpora adopted you, I think. Did he give you his name by a legal process?"

"No, my lord. Among artists, such things are not usual, nor are they deemed necessary. My generous master has no property, nor anything to leave to me. As to his name, it is a matter of no consequence to one in my social position, whether I bear it of justice or of right. If I justify it by the possession of any talents, I shall have acquired it fairly. If not, I shall have received an honor of which I am unworthy."

The count was silent for a few moments. Then, taking Consuelo's hand once again: "The noble frankness," he said, "with which you reply to me, gives me the highest opinion of you. Do not imagine that I have asked these details in order to undervalue you, either for your birth or your condition. I wished to perceive whether you had any reluctance to tell me the truth, and I perceive that you have none. I give you infinite credit for it, and I hold you nobler through your virtues than we are ourselves, we nobles, by virtue of our titles."

Consuelo smiled at the good taste with which the old patrician admired her making so ready a confession, and that without a blush. In that surprise there was visible to her a remnant of those prejudices which existed in the mind of Christian, the more tenaciously in proportion as he resisted them the more nobly; for it was evident that he was combating them, and that he desired to conquer them.

"Now," he resumed, "my dear child, I am about to put you a question yet more delicate than these, and I have cause to ask all your indulgence to my temerity."

"Fear nothing, monseigneur," said she. "I will answer everything and that with as little hesitation as the last."

"Well, my child, you are not married, are you?"

"No, monseigneur; not that I am aware."

"And—you are not a widow?—you have no children?"

"I am not a widow, and have no children," said Consuelo, now half inclined to laugh, not guessing at what the count was aiming.

"To be short then," he resumed, "you have not engaged yourself to any one—are you perfectly free?"

"Pardon me, monseigneur, I had engaged myself with the consent, and even by the commands of my dying mother, to a youth whom I had loved from my childhood, with whom I was brought up, and whose betrothed I was when I left Venice."

"Ah! you are engaged, then," said the count with a strange mixture of regret and satisfaction.

"No, monseigneur, I am perfectly free," replied Consuelo. "He whom I loved broke faith with me disgracefully, and I left him forever."

"You loved him, then?" asked the count, after a pause.

"I did. With my whole soul."

"And—perhaps you love him yet?"

"No, monseigneur, that is impossible."

"And should you have no pleasure in seeing him again?"

"The sight of him would be torture to me."

"And you never permitted—I mean to say he never dared—, But you will say that I am intrusive, and seek to know too much."

"I understand you, monseigneur; and since I am called upon to confess, and do not desire to obtain your esteem surreptitiously, I will put it in your power to judge, to a tittle, whether I deserve it or not. He dared many things—but nothing save what I permitted. We have often drank from the same cup, rested on the same bench. He has slept in my room while I have told my beads. He has watched over me when I have been sick. I did not keep myself fearfully. We were alone in the world, therefore we loved one another; we were to be married, therefore we respected one another. I had sworn to my mother to be what is called a prudent girl; and I have kept my word—if it be prudent for one to believe a man who is bound to deceive her, and to give confidence, affection, and esteem, to a man who deserves no one of these. It was when he wished to cease being my brother without becoming my husband, that I began to defend myself. It was when he began to be faithless to me that I rejoiced that I had defended myself. It was in the power of that man, utterly void as he is of honor, to boast to the contrary. But to a poor girl like me that matters little. So long as I sing truly, the world asks no more of me. So long as I can look without remorse to the crucifix, on which I swore to my mother that I would be chaste, I shall not trouble myself much what the world says of me. I have no family to blush for me; no brothers, no cousins to fight for me——"

"No brothers?—you have one."

Consuelo felt herself on the point of revealing the whole truth to the old count, under the seal of secrecy. But she feared that it would be cowardly in her to seek otherwise than from herself, protection against one who had menaced her so cowardly. She thought that she ought to have within herself firmness enough to defend and deliver herself from Anzoleto. And farther yet, the generosity of her nature forbade her to think even of having a man turned out of doors whom she had loved so religiously. How politely soever Count Christian might contrive to rid himself of Anzoleto, how infamous soever the conduct of Anzoleto might have been, she could not find it in her heart to subject him to so terrible a humiliation. She replied, therefore, to the old man's explanation by saying that she regarded her brother as a wrong-headed, hair-brained boy, whom she had never been used to treat except as a child.

"But he is not a bad character, is he?" asked the count.

"Perhaps he is a bad character," she replied. "I have as little to do with him as possible; our characters and manners are very different. Your lordship must have remarked that I was by no means anxious to keep him here."

"That shall be as you will, my child. I believe that your judgment is excellent; and now that you have confided everything to me, with a frankness so noble——"

"Pardon me, monseigneur," Consuelo interrupted him. "I have not told you *all* that relates to me; for you have not asked me all. I am ignorant of the motives for that interest which you have this day deigned to take in my existence: but I presume that some one has spoken to you more or less unfavorably of me, and that you are desirous of knowing whether my presence here is a dishonor to your house. Thus far you have questioned me only on very superficial points, and I should have thought myself very deficient in modesty had I presumed to enter into conversation with you on my own private affairs, without your permission; but since you seem to wish to be acquainted with everything concerning me, I ought to inform you of a circumstance which will, perhaps, lower me in your opinion. It is not only possible, as you have often imagined, that I may be induced to adopt the stage as a profession, although I have at present no such intention; but it is also true that I made my debut at Venice last year, under the name of Consuelo. I was surnamed the Zingarella, and all Venice is acquainted with my face and my voice."

"Hold!" cried the count, astonished at this new revelation, "You!—are you, then, that wonder, concerning whom there was such an ado at Venice last year, and who was mentioned in all the Italian papers, with such pompous eulogiums? The finest voice, the greatest genius, that has been displayed within the memory of man."

"On the stage of San Samuel, monseigneur, doubtless those praises were grossly exaggerated; but it is incontestable that I am that very same Consuelo, that I sang in several operas, and that I am an actress, or as people call me more politely, a cantatrice. You can judge now whether I deserve the continuance of your goodness."

"These are very extraordinary circumstances, and a very singular destiny!" said the count, enwrapped in deep reflections. "Have you ever mentioned this, here to—to any other than myself, my child?"

"I have told nearly all of it to your son, Monseigneur, although I have not gone into all the details which you have heard."

"Albert, then, is acquainted with your extraction, your first love, your profession?"

"Yes, Monseigneur."

"It is well, my dear signora. I cannot thank you enough for the admirable uprightness of your conduct in regard to us; and I promise you that you shall have no cause to repent of it. Now, Consuelo—(yes, I remember that is the name by which Albert has called you from the first, whenever he spoke Spanish with you)—permit me to collect myself a little, for I feel greatly moved, and we have yet many subjects on which I wish to talk with you, my dear, and you must pardon the trouble I am giving you, as I draw near to a decision on so grave a subject. Do me the favor to wait for me an instant here."

He went forth; and Consuelo following him with her eyes saw him, through the gilded doors adorned with panes of plate glass, pass into his oratory, and there kneel down and pray fervently.

Gradually become herself vehemently excited, she became lost in

conjectures, as to what should be the result of a conversation so solemnly introduced. At first, she thought that while waiting for her, Anzoleto had already done, in his spiteful mood, what he had threatened to do; that he had talked with the chaplain, or with Hanz, and that in a manner in which he had spoken of her had raised serious scruples in the mind of her hosts. But Count Christian was one to whom it was impossible to feign; and up to this moment his demeanor and his words both implied an increase, not a falling off, of affection. Moreover, the frankness of her replies had struck him, as if they had been most unexpected disclosures, and the last, more especially, had overcome him like a clap of thunder. And now he was praying God to enlighten him, or to sustain him in the performance of some great resolution. Is he about, she asked herself, to require me to separate myself from my brother? Is he about to offer me money?—ah! Heaven preserve from that outrage. But no; he is too delicate, too kind, to dream of so humiliating me. What, then, could he have desired to say to me, in the first instance? what can he desire to say to me now? Doubtless my long walk with his son has alarmed him, and he is about to blame me. I have, perhaps, deserved, and I will accept the lecture, since I cannot reply sincerely to the questions which he may put to me, with regard to Albert. This has been a hard day; and if I pass many more such I shall no longer be able to dispute the palm of song with Anzoleto's jealous mistresses. I feel as though my breast were in flames and my throat parched.

Count Christian now returned to her. He was calm, and his pale face bore witness to a victory gained with the noblest intentions. "My daughter," he resumed, seating himself again beside Consuelo, and compelling her to retain the sumptuous arm-chair, which she would fain have resigned to him, and on which she sat enthroned, against her own will, with an expression of fear, "it is time that I should reply frankly to the frankness which you have given me. Consuelo, my son loves you."

Consuelo turned red and pale by turns. She endeavored to speak, but Christian interrupted her.

"I am not asking you a question," said he. "I should have no right to do so, nor you any to reply to me; for I know that you have in no wise encouraged Albert's hopes. He has himself told me all, and I believe him, because he has never lied—nor have I."

"Nor I," said Consuelo, raising her eyes to heaven, with the most candid expression of pride. "Count Albert should have told you, monseigneur——"

"That you rejected every idea of a union with him."

"It was my duty so to do. I knew the usages and ideas of the world, I knew that I was not made to be a wife for Count Albert, if for this reason only, that I hold myself inferior to no living being before God, and that I would not receive as grace or favor, that which I hold to be just before men."

"I know your just pride, Consuelo. I should think it exaggerated if Albert depended on himself alone; but believing, as you did, that I should not approve such a union, you were bound to reply as you did reply."

"Now, Monseigneur," said Consuelo, rising, "I understand all that is to follow. Spare me, I beseech you, the humiliation which I have been dreading. I will leave your house, as I would have left it long ago, had I not feared by doing so to compromise the reason or the life

of Count Albert; on which I have greater influence than I have ever desired to possess. Since you know that which I was not permitted to reveal to you, you can now watch over him, prevent the consequences of this separation, and resume that care for him which belongs to you, and not to me. If I have indiscreetly arrogated it to myself, it is a fault which God will pardon me; for he knows with what purity of sentiment I have conducted myself thus far."

"I know it," replied the Count; "and God has spoken to my conscience, even as Albert has spoken to my affections. Remain seated therefore, Consuelo, and do not be in haste to condemn my intentions. It is not to order you to leave my house, that I asked you hither; but rather to implore you, with clasped hands, never again to leave it."

"Never again!" cried Consuelo, sinking back in her chair, overpowered alike by the pleasure she felt at the reparation made to her dignity by this generous offer, and the alarm which its meaning caused her. "What! Stay here all my life! Your lordship cannot appreciate what you have done me the honor to offer me."

"I have thought of it much, my daughter," replied the count, with a melancholy smile; "and I feel that I have no reason to repent of it. My son loves you desperately; you have all power over his spirit. It is you who restored him to me—you who sought him out in that mysterious place which he will not disclose to me, but to which, he has told me, no other than a mother or a saint would have dared to penetrate. It is you who risked your life to save him from the solitude and the frenzy in which he was wearing away his existence. It is, thanks to you, that he has ceased to give such terrible cause for uneasiness, by his long and unaccountable absences. It is you who has restored him to calmness, health, and reason by a single word; for it must not be dissembled that my unhappy child was mad, and it is certain that he is mad no longer. We passed the whole of last night conversing together, and he showed me that he possessed a wisdom superior to my own. I knew that you were about to go out together this morning. I had given him authority, therefore, to ask you that to which you would not listen. You were afraid of me, dear Consuelo; you thought that the old Rudolstadt, thickly swathed in his aristocratic prejudices, would be ashamed to owe you his son. Well, you were deceived. The old Rudolstadt had his pride and his prejudices, doubtless, perhaps, some of them he has yet—he will not paint himself as pure before you—but he abjures them, and under the impulse of an illimitable gratitude, he thanks you for having restored to him his last, his only child."

CHAPTER LIX.

CONSUELO was deeply affected by a demonstration which re-established her in her own opinion, and quieted her conscience. Up to that moment, she had often feared that she had given way imprudently to her generosity and her courage. Now she received their sanction and their reward. Her tears of joy were mingled with those of the old man, and they sat a long time side by side, both too much affected to resume the conversation.

Nevertheless, Consuelo did not yet understand the proposition which had been made to her; and the Count, fancying that he had explained himself sufficiently, looked on her silence and her tears as signs of her consent and gratitude. "I will go now," he said at length, "and bring my son to your feet, that he may join his blessings to mine on learning the full extent of his happiness."

"Hold, Monseigneur!" cried Consuelo, astonished at his precipitation. "I do not understand what you require of me. You approve of the affection which Count Albert has bestowed on me, and the devotedness which I have exhibited for him. You grant me all your confidence; you know that I will not betray it; but how can I engage to consecrate my whole life to a friendship of so delicate a nature? I see that you rely on time and on my reason to maintain the holy and moral disposition of your son, and to tranquilize the vivacity of his attachment to myself; but I know not whether I shall be able long to maintain that power; and, moreover, if such an intimacy with a man so enthusiastic were not in itself too dangerous, I am not at liberty to consecrate myself even to a task so glorious—I do not belong to myself."

"Heavens! what say you, Consuelo? Have you, then, misunderstood me? or did you deceive me when you told me that you were free—that you had no attachment of the heart, nor engagement, nor family?"

"But, Monseigneur," replied Consuelo, still more astonished, "I have a profession, a calling, a position. I belong to the art to which from my infancy I was consecrated."

"What do you say? Great God! Do you wish to return to the stage?"

"I do not say that. I told you the truth when I said that my wishes point not that way. I have not yet experienced aught but horrid sufferings during that stormy career. But I feel, nevertheless, that I should be rash were I to pledge myself to renounce it. It is my destiny, and perhaps it is not in the power of mortal to elude the future which he has traced out unto himself. Whether I return to the boards, or give lessons and concerts, I must be still a cantatrice. For what should I be good, if not for that? Where should I find independence? With what should I occupy my spirit, wearied with toil and thirsting for that species of excitement?"

"O, Consuelo! Consuelo!" cried Count Christian, with a painful cry, "all that you say to me is true. But I thought that you loved my son—and now I see that you love him not."

"And if I did love him with that degree of passion which is necessary to self-renunciation, what should you say then, Monseigneur?" cried Consuelo, impatiently. "Do you suppose it absolutely impossible that a woman should *fall in love* with Count Albert, that you ask me to stay with him always?"

"What! have I then explained myself so ill, or do you think me an idiot, my dear Consuelo? Have I not asked your heart and hand for my son? Have I not laid at your feet a legitimate and, certainly, an honorable alliance? If you love Albert you will find, doubtless, in the happiness of sharing his life, a recompense for the glory and the triumphs which you will forsake. But you love him not, since you cannot regard it but as impossible to sacrifice what you call the destiny of your life."

This explanation was certainly tardy, though the good Count Christian knew it not. It was not without a mixture of fear and

mortal repugnance that the good old lord had sacrificed to the happiness of his son, all the ideas of his life, all his principles of caste, and when, after a long and painful struggle with Albert and himself, he had consummated the sacrifice, the actual ratification of an act so terrible could not be divulged from his heart, through his lips, without a second effort.

This Consuelo foresaw or divined; for at the moment when Christian appeared to give up all hopes of obtaining her consent to this marriage, there was certainly a strange expression of involuntary joy mingled with a sort of consternation legible in the features of the old lord.

In an instant Consuelo understood her situation, and a pride, perhaps a little too personal in its nature, made her shrink from the alliance that was proposed to her. "Do you wish me to become Count Albert's wife?" she said, still struck with wonder at so strange a proposal. "Will you consent that I shall bear your name? will you call me your daughter? will you present me to your relatives, to your friends? Ah! Monseigneur, how much you must love your son, and how much he ought to love you!"

"If you consider this generosity so great, Consuelo, it must be either because your heart can conceive none such, or because the object of it appears unworthy to you."

"Monseigneur," said Consuelo, having collected herself, and hiding her face in her hands, "I think I am dreaming. My pride arouses in my own despite, at the thought of the humiliation in which my whole life would be steeped, were I to accept the sacrifice which your paternal love leads you to offer me."

"And who would dare to humiliate you, Consuelo, when the father and the son alike would shield you with theegis of marriage and of our family?"

"And the aunt, Monseigneur; would the aunt, who is the true mother of this family, endure to look on that without a blush?"

"She will come herself and add her prayers to ours, if you will promise to be persuaded by them. Do not ask more than the weakness of human nature can grant. A lover, a father, may endure the humiliation and the pain of a refusal; my sister would not dare encounter it. But with the certainty of success we will bring her into your arms, my daughter."

"Monseigneur," asked Consuelo, trembling, "did Count Albert tell you that I loved him?"

"No," replied the Count, struck with a sudden reminiscence; "Albert told me a hundred times that the obstacle would be in your own heart. He repeated it to me time after time; but I—I could not believe it. Your reserve, I supposed, was founded on your uprightness and your delicacy; but I believed that delivering you of your scruples I would obtain from you the confession which you had refused to him."

"And what said he to you of our walk to-day?"

"One word only. 'Try, father. It is the only way to know whether it is pride or dislike that bars against me the avenues of her heart.'"

"Alas! Monseigneur, what should you say were I to tell you that I know not myself."

"I should think it was dislike, my dear Consuelo. Alas! my son! my unhappy son! How frightful a destiny is this. That he cannot

be loved by the only woman whom he can ever love. This last misfortune was alone wanting to us!"

"Oh! Monseigneur, how you must hate me—oh, my God! you cannot understand how my pride can still resist when you have immolated your own. The pride of a girl, such as I, must seem to you to lack foundation, and yet, believe me, there is at this moment as violent a strife in my breast as that which you have vanquished in your own."

"I understand it. Believe not, Signora, that I do not respect enough the modesty, the uprightness, and the disinterestedness of your nature, not to comprehend the pride which is founded on the possession of such treasures. But that which paternal love has sufficed to conquer—you see that I speak to you with perfect openness—I do think the love of a woman may conquer also. Well, then, supposing that the whole life of Albert, my own life, and yours, should be a struggle against the prejudices of the world—supposing that we must suffer much and long, all three of us, and my sister with us, would there not be in our mutual tenderness, in the evidences of our consciences, and in the fruits of our devotion, enough to make us stronger than the whole world combined against us. A great love makes all those evils appear light, which seem to you too heavy for yourself and for all of us. But this great love you seek for, timid and overcome, in the depths of your own soul, and you find it not, Consuelo, for it is not there."

"In truth, then, you are right," said Consuelo, pressing her hands strongly against her heart, "the question lies in that, entirely in that: all the rest is as nothing. I, also, I have had my prejudices: your conduct has proved to me that it is my duty to tread them under foot—to be as great, as heroic as you are. Let us say no more of my repugnances, of my false shame. Let us speak no more even of my future prospects, of my art," she added, with a deep sigh. "Even that I could abjure; if—if I love Albert, for it is that which I must learn. Listen to me, Monseigneur. I have asked myself that very question more than a hundred times; but never with that confidence which the knowledge of your decision gives me. How should I have been able to question myself seriously on that point, while to ask that question was in itself as I then regarded it, either a madness or a crime. Now I believe that I can know myself, and determine. I ask of you a few days to collect myself, and to know if the immense devotion which I feel for him, the unlimited respect and esteem with which his great qualities fill me, the powerful sympathy which he commands, that vast dominion which he exerts over me by his slightest word, arise from love, or from admiration only. For I feel all this, Monseigneur, and all this is combated within me by an inexplicable terror; by a deep melancholy; and I will confess it to you, O my noble friend, by the memory of a love less enthusiastical, but sweeter and more tender, and which resembles this in nothing."

"Strange and noble girl," replied Christian, tenderly, "what wisdom, and yet what wild fantasies, are mingled in your words. In many respects you resemble my poor Albert, and again, the vague agitation and uncertainty of your sentiments remind me of my wife, my noble, my lovely, my melancholy Wanda. O, Consuelo, you awaken in me recollections very tender, yet very bitter. I was about to say to you, Conquer this irresolution, overcome these prejudices; love, from virtue only from greatness of soul, from compassion,

from the exertion of a pious and ardent clarity, this unhappy man, who adores you, and who, even if he render you unhappy, will owe you his salvation, and will make you worthy of a celestial recompense. You have recalled to my mind his mother—his mother, who gave herself to me as a duty and an act of friendship. She could not feel for me, a plain, good-humored, shy man, that enthusiasm which burned in her imagination. She was, however, faithful and generous to the end; and yet how she suffered. Alas! her affection was my joy, and at the same time my torture; her constancy my pride and my remorse. She died in her undertaking, and my heart was broken for ever. And now if I am living without an object, obliterated, dead before my time, be not astonished at it, Consuelo; I have suffered what no one has ever understood, what no one has ever heard, and which I tremble in confessing to you. Oh! rather than induce you to make such a sacrifice, or urge Albert to accept it, may my eyes be closed in grief, and may my son fall a victim to the destiny which it would seem awaits him. I know too well the consequence of endeavoring to force nature, and of combating the irresistible propensities of living souls. Take time, then, to reflect, my daughter," added the old count, pressing Consuelo to his breast, swollen with sobs, and kissing her noble brow with all a father's love. "Thus all will be for the best. If you must refuse, Albert, prepared by previous anxiety, will not be thunderstruck by the shock, as he would have been to-day by the horrible information."

With this their interview was ended, and Consuelo, gliding timidly through the galleries, in constant apprehension of meeting Anzoleta, took refuge in her own chamber, wearied and exhausted with excitement.

First she endeavored to bring herself down to the requisite state of composure by trying to get a little sleep. She felt thoroughly broken, and scarcely had she thrown herself upon her bed than she fell into a state of somnolence which was painful rather than restorative. She was desirous of falling asleep with the thought of Albert on her mind, in order to assimilate it to herself during those mysterious manifestations of sleep, in which we sometimes believe that we find the prophetic meaning of things which pre-occupy our minds. But the interrupted dreams which flitted through her mind for several hours, incessantly, brought back to her eyes Anzoleta in lieu of Albert. It was ever Venice—ever the Corte Minelli. It was ever her first love, calm, full of promise, and poetical. And each time that she awoke the recollection of Albert must needs return to her, accompanied by sinister thoughts of the cavern, wherein sounds of the violin, repeated tenfold by the echoes of the solitude, seemed to evoke the dead, or to mourn over the scarce closed tomb of Zdendo. At that idea fear and sorrow closed her heart against any impression of tenderness. The future which was proposed to her, came to her fancy only through the medium of cold darkness and bloody visions, while the past, radiant and fertile of happiness, gave her bosom to expand, and filled her heart with joyous palpitations. She thought, as she dreamed of that past, that she heard her own voice echoing through boundless space, filling the void of nature, and widening in vast circles as it soared upward to the universe; while on the other hand, so often as the fantastical sounds of the cavern-violin returned to her mind, her voice became hollow and dismal, and lost itself like the death-rattle in the abyss of the earth.

Those vague dreams wearied her to such a degree that she arose in order to banish them; and the first tones of the bell informing her that dinner would be served within half an hour, she began to dress herself, still continuing to involve herself in all the same ideas. But strange as it may seem, for the first time in her life, she was more attentive to her mirror, and more occupied with her hair and its adjustment, than with the serious affairs of which she was seeking a solution. In spite of herself she made herself as handsome as she could, and desired to be so. And it was not to awaken the desires and arouse the jealousy of two rival lovers, that she felt that irresistible impulse of coquetry; she thought not, she could not think save of one only. Albert had never said a word to her of her face. In the enthusiasm of his passion he thought her more beautiful than she really was; but so elevated were his ideas, that he would have deemed it a profanation to look at her person with the eyes of a lover, or scrutinize her with the satisfaction of an artist. She was always enveloped in a cloud which his eyes could not penetrate, and which his fancy converted into a dazzling glory. Whether she looked better or worse, to him she was ever the same. He had seen her pale, emaciated, faded, struggling in the embrace of death, and resembling a spectre rather than a woman. He had then sought in her features, with attention and anxiety, the symptoms of her malady for the better or for the worse; but it never had occurred to him to think in that moment whether she was ugly or not, nor whether she could ever become an object of repugnance and disgust. And when she had recovered all the brilliancy of her youth, and the expression of life, he saw not whether she had lost or gained beauty. She was to him, whether in life or in death, the ideal of all youth, of all sublime expression, of all unmatched and incomparable beauty. Thus Consuelo had never once thought of him while she was dressing herself before her mirror.

But what a difference on the part of Anzoleto; with what minute attention he had gazed at her, judged and dissected her in his imagination, on the day when he had asked himself whether she was not ugly? Now, he had taken note of the smallest graces of her person, now admired the least pains she had taken to please him! How he knew her hair, her arms, her foot, her carriage, every tint that was blended in her beautiful complexion, every fold of her wavy garments! With what ardent vivacity he had praised her loveliness; with what voluptuous languishment he had perused her! At that time, the chaste girl understood not the beatings of her own heart. She wished not to understand them now; and yet she felt them grow more violent at the idea of reappearing before his eyes. She grew angry with herself; she blushed for very shame and vexation; she endeavored to beautify herself for Albert alone; and yet unconsciously she chose the head-dress, the riband, and even the expression of the eye which pleased Anzoleto. "Alas! alas!" she said to herself, as she tore herself away from the mirror, when her toilet was completed! "it is then true that I can think but of him alone, and that happiness overpassed exercises over me a power more puissant than that effected by present contempt, and the promise of a future love. I may look to the future as I will, without him it can be nothing but terror and despair. And what would it be with him? Do I not know that the happy days of Venice cannot return again; that innocence can never dwell with us again, that the soul of Anzoleto is so brutalized and cor-

rupted, that his caresses would debase me, and that my life would hourly be poisoned by shame, jealousy, terror and regret?"

While she questioned herself on this head with the strictest severity, Consuelo was assured that she was not deceiving herself, and that she had not the most secret emotion of desire for Anzoleto. She loved him not at the present—she feared and almost detested him in a futurity, wherein his perversity must needs increase constantly; but in the past, she loved him so passionately that her life and soul seemed inextricably bound up in the memory of him. He was henceforth to her as the portrait of a being whom she had once adored, reminding her of days of delights; and, like a newly married widow, who conceals herself from her new husband in order to gaze on the portrait of the old, she felt that the dead love had more vitality than the living within her heart.

CHAPTER LX.

CONSUELO had too much judgment and too much elevation of spirit not to know that of the two loves which she inspired, that of Count Albert was, without a possibility of comparison, the truer, the nobler, and the more precious. So that when she found herself in the presence of the two, she believed she had triumphed over her enemy. The deep gaze of Albert, which seemed to sink to the very bottom of her soul, the slow and firm pressure of his loyal hand, made her aware that he was acquainted with the circumstance of her conference with Christian, and that he awaited her final decision submissively and gratefully. In truth, Albert had obtained more than he had expected; and the very uncertainty which he now felt was pleasurable to him as compared with that which he had apprehended; so far was he removed from the overbearing and insolent presumption of Anzoleto. He, on the contrary, had armed himself with all his resolution.

Having divined with considerable accuracy what was going on around him, he had determined to fight it foot by foot, and not to leave the house until he should be thrust out by the shoulders. His free and easy attitude, his ironical and impudent glance, disgusted Consuelo to the last degree; and when he came up to her with his usual effrontery, and offered his hand, she turned away and took that which Albert presented to conduct her to dinner. As was the usual habit, the young count took his place at table opposite to Consuelo, and the old Christian made her seat herself at his left, in the chair formerly occupied by the Baroness Amelia, which she had used since her departure. But in the place of the chaplain, who ordinarily sat there, the canoness insisted upon the pretended brother to place himself between them; so that all Anzoleto's bitter sarcasms uttered in the lowest whisper could reach the ears of the young girl, while his irreverent sallies could offend as much as he desired, the aged priest, on whom he had already tried his hand.

Anzoleto's plan was very simple. He was anxious to render himself odious and insupportable to those members of the family whom he suspected of being averse to the projected marriage, in order to give them, by his own vulgarity, his familiar air, and his misapplica-

tion of words, the worst idea of the companions and family of Consuelo. "We shall see," thought he to himself, "how they will get down the brother, whom I am about to serve up to them."

Anzoletto, who was a very unfinished singer, and but a moderate tragedian, had an intuitive talent as a good comedian. He had already seen enough of the world to know how to imitate the elegant manners and the agreeable language of good society; but to play that part would have been only to reconcile the canonesse to the low extraction of her son-in-law, and he therefore undertook the opposite line, and with the more success in that it was more natural to him. Being well satisfied that, although Wenceslawa persisted in speaking no language but German, the Court tongue, and that used in grave business, she did not miss a word which he spoke in Italian; he set himself to chatting, right or wrong, to singing the praises of the good Hungarian wine, the effects of which he did not fear in the least, accustomed as he was of old to far more heady beverages, but of which he soon pretended to feel the hearty influences, in order to give himself a more inveterate character as a drunkard.

His project succeeded to a marvel. Count Christian, after having at first laughed indulgently at his sallies and his buffoonery, soon ceased to smile but with an effort, and required all the urbanity of his position as a lord in his own house, and all his affection as a father, to prevent his setting the odious brother-in-law, that was to be, of his noble son, in his proper place. The chaplain, perfectly indignant, could not sit easy on his chair, and murmured German exclamations which sounded like exorcisms. His meal was dreadfully disturbed, and never in his life was his digestion more uneasy. The canonesse listened to all the impertinences of her guest with a constrained contempt and a malignant satisfaction. At each new misdemeanor she raised her eyes to her brother as if to call him to witness; and the good Christian bowed his head, pretending to be absent, in order to distract the observation of the auditors. Then the canonesse would look toward Albert; but Albert was impassive. He seemed neither to hear nor see their unpleasant and jovial guest.

But the most cruelly annoyed of all the persons present was unquestionably poor Consuelo. At first she believed that Anzoletto, in his long career of debauchery, had contracted those dissipated manners and that impudent turn of mind which almost hindered her recognition of him. She was indeed disgusted and astounded to such a degree as to be on the point of leaving the table. But when she perceived that it was a *ruse de guerre*, she recovered the composure which became her innocence and her dignity. She had not mingled herself with the secrets and afflictions of that family, to win by intrigue the station that was offered to her. That rank had not flattered her ambition even for an instant, and she felt strong in her uprightness of conscience, to defy the secret suspicions of the canonesse. She saw at a glance that the love of Albert and the confidence of his father were superior to such a wretched trial; and the contempt which she felt for Anzoletto, cowardly and malicious in his vengeance, rendered her stronger yet. Her eyes once met those of Albert, and they understood each other. Those of Consuelo asked the question, "Yes?" and those of Albert replied, "In spite of all."

"It is not done yet," said Anzoletto, in a low voice to Consuelo, for he had seen and interpreted the glance.

"You are assisting me much," replied Consuelo, "and I thank you for it."

They were both speaking between their lips in that rapid Venetian dialect which seems to be composed almost entirely of vowels, and in which there are so many ellipses that even Italians of Rome or Florence have themselves some trouble in understanding it at a first hearing.

"I can easily imagine that you detest me at this moment," said Anzoletto; "and that you think it certain that you shall hate me forever. But you shall never escape me for all that."

"You have unmasked too soon," said Consuelo.

"But not too late," replied Anzoletto. "Come, *Padre mis Beneditto*," he continued, addressing himself to the chaplain, and nudging his elbow in such a sort as to make him spill half the glass of wine which he was raising to his lips over his hand. "Drink more courageously of this good wine, which does as much good both to soul and body as that of the holy mass. *Seigneur Count*," he continued, presenting his glass to the aged Christian, "you have in reserve by your side, a flask of yellow crystal, which shines like the sun. I am sure that if I were to swallow only one drop of the nectar it contains I should be changed into a demigod."

"Beware, my good youth," said the count laying his hand, covered with rings, on the cut neck of the flask. "Old men's wine sometimes shuts young men's mouths."

"You have a rage for being as pretty as a goblin," said Anzoletto in good clear Italian to Consuelo, so that every one at table could hear him. "You put me in mind of the *Diavolessa* of Galuppi, which you acted so well at Venice last year. Ah ha! *Seigneur Count*, do you expect to keep my sister long here in your golden cage, lined with silk. She is a song-bird, I can tell you, and the bird which is robbed of its voice soon loses its pretty feathers also. She is very happy here, I can well understand. But that good public, whom she turned giddy with admiration last season, is asking for her again, and that aloud, down yonder; and, as for me, if you would give me your name, your castle, all the wine in your cellar, and your venerable chaplain to boot, I would not renounce my quinquetoes, my buskins, and my flourishes."

"You are a comedian, then, too, are you?" asked the canoness, with dry, cold disdain.

"A comedian! a *mountebank*, at your service, *illustrissima*," replied Anzoletto, without being in the least disconcerted.

"Has he talent?" enquired the old Christian of Consuelo, with a tranquillity full of kindness and benevolence.

"None whatever," replied Consuelo, looking on her adversary with pity.

"If it be so, you accuse yourself," said Anzoletto, "for I am your pupil. I hope, nevertheless, that I have enough," he added in Venetian "to upset your game."

"It is yourself only that you will harm," replied Consuelo, in the same dialect. "Evil intentions corrupt the heart, and yours will lose more by all this than you can make me lose in the opinion of others."

"I am glad to see that you accept my challenge. It is needless to lower your eyes beneath the shade of your vigor, for I can see rage and spite sparkle in your eyes."

"Alas! you can read nothing in them but deep disgust on your own account. I hoped I should have been able to forget that I ought to despise you, but you take pleasure in recalling it to my mind."

"Contempt and love oftentimes go together."

"In evil spirits."

"In the proudest spirits—so it has been, so it shall ever be."

The whole dinner passed thus. When they withdrew into the drawing-room, the canoness, who appeared determined to amuse herself with Anzoletto's impertinence, asked him to sing something. He did not wait to be asked twice, and after running his fingers vigorously over the keys of the old groaning piano, he set up one of those energetic songs with which he was in the habit of enlivening the Count Zustiniani's private suppers. The words were loose enough, but the canoness did not hear them, and was amused by the vigor and energy of the singer. Count Christian could not help admiring the fine voice and prodigious facility of the singer. He gave himself up with perfect artlessness to the pleasure of listening, and when the first air was ended asked him for a second. Albert, who sat next to Consuelo, seemed entirely deaf, and did not utter a word. Anzoletto fancied that he was spiteful, and felt himself outdone in something. He forgot that it had been his intention to dismay his hosts by his musical improprieties, and moreover said that, whether for their innocence or their ignorance of the dialect, it was lost time, he gave himself up to the pleasure of exciting admiration, and sang for the pleasure of singing, desiring at the same time to let Consuelo see the progress which he had made. He had in truth gained in that order of musical power which nature had assigned to him. His voice had perhaps already lost some of its youthful freshness. Orgies and dissipation had robbed it of its velvet softness; but he was more perfectly the master of its effects, and more skillful in overcoming the difficulties towards which his taste and instinct always led him. He sang well, and received many praises from Count Christian and the canoness, and also from the chaplain, who loved above all things fine *strokes*, and who thought Consuelo's by far too simple and too natural to be very scientific. "You said that he had no talent," said the Count to Consuelo. "You are either too severe, or too modest in your opinion of your pupil. He has much; and I recognise something of you in his singing."

The good Count Christian wished to efface by this little triumph of Anzoletto, some of the mortification which his style of conduct had caused his pretended sister. He laid much stress, therefore, on the merits of the singer; and the latter, who was by far too fond of praise not to be wearied of the low part he was playing, returned to the piano, after having observed that Count Albert was becoming more and more pensive. The canoness, who had a habit of falling asleep sometimes in the middle of long pieces of music, asked for another Venetian song, and this time Anzoletto made a better choice. He knew that popular airs were those which he sang the best. Consuelo herself had not the *piquante* accentuation of the dialect so naturally and so characteristically as he, himself the child of the languages, and *par excellence* a Swiss singer.

He imitated, therefore, with such a grace, and such a charm, at once the rude and frank manner of the fishermen of Istria, and at other, the spiritual and careless recklessness of the Venetian gondoliers, that it was impossible not to listen to him, and look at him with interest. His fine face, full of play and penetration, took at one time the grave and proud expression, at another the rollicking and sportive air, of those or of these. The very bad taste of his dress which could be recognised as Venetian at a league's distance, added

If anything, to the illusion, and served his personal advantages instead of injuring them, as it would have done on any other occasion. Consuelo, who was at first cold as marble, was first forced to assume indifference and abstraction, for emotion gained on her more and more every moment. She seemed to see all Venice again in Anzoletto, and in that Venice all the Anzoletto of old days, with his gayety, his innocent love, and his boyish haughtiness. Her eyes were filled with tears, and the merry features which excited all the rest to laughter, pierced her heart with the deepest tenderness.

After the songs, the Count Christian asked for chaunts. "Oh! if you come to that," said Anzoletto, "I only know those which are sung at Venice, and they are all arranged for two voices, so that if my sister does not choose to sing with me, I shall be unable to gratify your lordships."

Consuelo was immediately implored to sing. She resisted for a long time, although she felt a strong inclination to do so. But at last, yielding to the entreaties of the old Christian, who had set himself to effect a reconciliation between the brother and sister by pretending himself to be reconciled, she took her seat beside Anzoletto, and began to sing, trembling as she did so, one of those long canticles arranged in two parts, divided into strophes of three verses each, which are heard in Venice, during periods of devotion, resounding all night long around the Madonnas at the crossings of the streets. Their rhythm is rather animated than sad, but in the monotony of their burthen, and in the poetry of their words, having the impress of a half pagak piety, there is a sweet melancholy which gains on the hearer by degrees, and in the end takes full possession of him.

Consuelo sang in a sweet and veiled voice, in imitation of the Venetian women, and Anzoletto with the slightly hoarse and guttural accent of the young men of that country. At the same time he reproduced on the piano forte a feeble, but continuous and limpid accompaniment, which reminded his companion of the murmur of the water against the marble steps, and the whisper of the wind among the vine branches. She thought herself in Venice, on a fine summer's night, alone at the foot of one of those chapels in the open air, sheltered by arbors of the vine, and illuminated by a wavering lamp reflected in the gently undulating waters of the canals. Oh! what a contrast between the ominous and agonizing sensations which she had experienced that very morning on listening to Albert's violin on the margin of another stream, dark, stagnant, silent, crowded with phantoms, and that vision of Venice, with its fine sky, with sweet melodies, with waves of azure, showing long wakes of light from the rapidly glancing flambeaux or the resplendent stars. This magnificent spectacle Anzoletto brought back to her mind, this spectacle in which to her were concentrated all the ideas of liberty and of life; while the cavern, the fierce and fantastic strains of old time Bohemia, the bones lighted by funereal torches, and reflected in waters filled, perchance, with the same lugubrious relics, and in the midst of all the pale and ardent face of the ascetic Albert, the thought of an unknown world, the apparition of a symbolical scene, and the painful sensation of a fascination which she could not explain, were all too much for the simple and peaceful soul of Consuelo. In order to enter into that region of abstract ideas, it required her to make as great an effort as her imagination was capable of, but by which her whole nature was disturbed and tortured by mysterious sufferings and agonising present

ments. Her organization was all of the South, southern, and denied itself to the austere initiation of a mystic love. Albert was to her the genius of the North, deep, puissant, sometimes sublime, but always sad as the wind of icy nights and the subterranean roar of wintry torrents. It was the dreaming and investigating soul which interrogates and symbolizes all things,—the nights of storm, the savage harmonies of the forests, and the half-effaced inscriptions of antique monuments. Anzoleto, on the contrary, was the life of the South, the matter enkindled and fertilised by the great sun, by the broad light, drawing its poetry only from the intensity of its own growth, and its pride from the wealth of its own organic principles. It was the life of sentiment, with its greed of enjoyment, the intellectual carelessness and improvidence of the artist, a sort of ignorance of, or indifference to, the idea of good or evil, the easily-won happiness, the scorn or the impotence of reflection; in a word, the enemy and the antagonist of the ideal.

Between these two men, each of whom was the example of a type precisely the opposite and antipathic of the other, Consuelo had as little life, as little aptitude for energy or action as a body severed from its soul. She loved the beautiful, she thirsted for the ideal; Albert offered her and taught her these. But Albert, checked in the development of his genius, by something diseased in his intellect, had given himself up too much to the life of pure intellect. He knew so little of necessity and of real life, that he had often lost the faculty of feeling even his own existence. He did not even imagine how the ominous ideas and objects to which he had familiarised himself could, under the influence of love and virtue, inspire other feelings to his promised bride than the enthusiasm of faith, the tenderness of bliss. He had not foreseen, nor understood, that he was drawing her down into an atmosphere in which she must die as a tropical plant, in the twilight of the polar circles. In a word, he comprehended not the sort of violence which she was forced to put upon herself in order to identify her nature with his own.

Anzoleto, on the contrary, wounding the soul, and revolting the intellect of Consuelo at all points, still carried in his expanded breast, wide open to the breath of the breezes of the genial South—all that vital air which *the Flower of Spain*, as he was wont to call her in past time, required to animate her. She found in him a whole life of sensuous contemplation, animal, ignorant, and delicious—a whole world of tranquillity, carelessness, physical movements, uprightness without effort, and piety without reflection; in one word, almost the life of a bird. But is there not something of the bird in the artist, and must there be also some slight infusion of that cup, which is common to all other beings, in man himself, in order that he may be complete, and may bring to the best advantage the treasures of his intelligence?

Consuelo sung in a voice still more and more tender and touching, giving herself up with vague instinctive feelings to the distinctions, which I have drawn for her, though of course, too much at length. Let me be pardoned for it. Had I not done so it would be impossible to conceive by what fatal fitfulness of sentiment this young girl, so chaste and so sincere, who hated the treacherous Anzoleto a quarter of an hour before, and with good reason, could forget herself to such a point as to listen to his voice, to feel the waving of his hair, and to inhale his very breath with a sensation of delight. The drawing-room was too large to be at any time very well lighted, as has been already mentioned, and the day was fast closing. The desk of the piano forte

on which Anzoletto had spread open a large folio of music, concealed their heads from those who were sitting at a distance, and gradually their heads came nearer and nearer together. Anzoletto now played the accompaniment with one hand only, the other arm he had passed around the flexible waist of his formerly betrothed, and with it was drawing her closer to his own body. Six months of indignation and of grief had passed away like a dream from the mind of the young girl. She fancied herself at Venice; she prayed the Madonna to bless her love for the handsome lover whom her mother had given her, and who was praying beside her, hand to hand and heart to heart. Albert had left the room without her perceiving it, and the air became lighter, the twilight softer around her. Suddenly at the end of one of the strophes she felt the burning lips of her first lover pressed to her own. She stifled a cry with difficulty, and leaning over her piano forte, burst into tears.

At this moment Count Albert re-entered the room, heard her sobs, and saw the insulting joy of Anzoletto. The interruption of the song by the emotions of the young artiste did not so much surprise any of the other spectators of that rapid scene. No one had seen the kiss, and every one supposed that the recollections of her childhood, and her love of the art had moved her to tears.

Count Christian was indeed somewhat vexed at this sensibility, which was an evidence of so much attachment for, and of so many regrets connected with the very things the sacrifice of which he required. The canoness and the chaplain were delighted, trusting that the sacrifice could now never be accomplished. Albert had not as yet thought to ask himself whether the Countess Rudolstadt would become an artiste again, or must cease to be one. He would have accepted anything, permitted anything, nay, even demanded anything, provided that she could be happy and free, whether in retirement, in the world, or on the stage, at her own option. His want of prejudices and selfishness went so far even as to the overlooking of the simplest circumstances. It never, therefore, entered his mind that Consuelo would impose on herself any sacrifices on his account, who demanded none. But though he overlooked this obvious point, he yet saw farther, as he ever did. His eye pierced to the very heart of the tree, and his hand was laid on the worm that gnawed it. The true position of Anzoletto with regard to Consuelo, the real object which he was pursuing, and the actual sentiment which inspired him, were revealed to him in an instant. He gazed attentively at this man, to whom he had in every respect an antipathy, and on whom he had hitherto avoided to cast his eyes, because he would not hate Consuelo's brother. He now saw in him an audacious, desperate, and dangerous lover. The noble Albert thought not of himself; no suspicion, no jealousy entered his clear mind. The danger was all Consuelo's; for at a single glance of his deep and lustrous eye, that man whose feeble sight and delicate vision could not brook the sun, and could scarce distinguish forms and colors, read the very bottom of the souls, and penetrated, by the mysterious power of divination, into the most secret thoughts of villains and impostors. I will not attempt to explain by any natural means this strange gift which he certainly at times possessed. He was possessed of certain faculties—not yet explored to the bottom, or defined by science—utterly incomprehensible to all those around, as they are to the historian who now narrates them, and who, in relation to matters of that nature, is no

more enlightened after the lapse of a hundred years, than were the great intellects of his century. Albert, however, when he saw the vain and selfish spirit of his rival, said not to himself, "Lo! my enemy!" but he said, "Lo! the enemy of Consuelo!" and without suffering his discovery to become apparent, he promised himself that he would watch over her, and preserve her.

CHAPTER LXI.

So soon as Consuelo found a favorable moment she went out of the saloon, and passed into the garden. The sun had set, and the first stars sparkled white and serene in a sky still rosy in the west, already black to the eastward. The young artist sought to inspire tranquillity of mind and calmness from the pure cool air of that early autumn evening. Her bosom was oppressed with voluptuous languor, and yet she felt remorse for it and summoned to the aid of her will all the strength of her spirit. She might have said to herself, "*Can I not discover whether I love or hate?*" She trembled as if she had felt her courage forsaking her at this, the most dangerous crisis of her life; and for the first time she did not find within herself that distinctness of the first impulse, that holy confidence in her intentions which had always upheld her in the time of trial. She had left the drawing-room in order to escape the fascination which Anzoletto exercised over her, and she had felt at the same moment a vague wish that he should follow her. The leaves were beginning to fall, and when the hem of her vestment rustled against them, she fancied that she heard his steps behind her, and, ready to fly, not daring to return, she remained rooted to the place where she stood, as it were by magic.

Some one was indeed following her, but without daring or desiring to be discovered. It was Albert. A stranger to all those small dissimulations which are called social proprieties, and feeling elevated above all false shame by the greatness of his love, he had left the apartment a moment after her, resolved to protect her, without her own knowledge, and to prevent her intended seducer from rejoining her. Anzoletto had also observed his artless ardor, without being much alarmed by it. He had seen too clearly the agitation of Consuelo not to look upon his victory as certain; and, thanks to the audacious folly which many easy conquests had awakened in him, he determined no longer to carry it with a rough hand, no longer to provoke his intended victim, and no longer to surprise the family by his rudeness of demeanor. "It is no longer necessary to hurry myself so much," he said. "Anger may give her strength. An air of grief and dejection will make her forget the relics of her anger against me. Her spirit is proud, let us attack her senses. She is certainly less strict here than she was at Venice; she has become civilized in these regions. What matters it whether my rival be happy a day longer or no? To-morrow she shall be mine—perhaps this very night. We shall soon see. Let me not, however, drive her through fear into any desperate resolution. She has not betrayed me to them. Whether from pity or fear, she has not denied my part as brother; and

her great relatives, in spite of all my buffooneries, seem determined to support me for love of her. I will change my tactics, then. I have been quicker than I hoped; I can afford now to halt awhile."

Count Christian, the canoness, and the chaplain were, therefore, much surprised at seeing him suddenly assume excellent manners, a modest tone, and a gentle and pleasing demeanor. He had the tact, moreover, to complain to the chaplain of a bad headache, and to add that being naturally very sober, the Hungary wine, the strength of which he had not anticipated during dinner, had risen to his head. A moment had not passed before this confession was transmitted in German to the canoness and to the count, who accepted that species of justification with ready kindness. Wenceslawa was at first less indulgent, but the pains which the comedian took to please her, the respectful praises which he took occasion to offer her, on the subject of the advantages of nobility, the admiration which he displayed for the order established in the castle, soon disarmed her benevolent soul, incapable in any case of bearing rancor. She listened to him at first indolently, but ended by conversing with him with interest, and by agreeing with her brother, that he was an excellent and charming young man.

When Consuelo returned from her walk, an hour had elapsed, during which Anzoletto had not lost his time. He had in fact so well recovered the good graces of the family, that he had no doubt of his ability to remain as many days in the castle as he should find necessary to the accomplishment of his ends. He did not indeed understand what the old count said to Consuelo in German, but he guessed from the eyes that were directed towards himself, and from the surprise and embarrassment of the young girl herself, that Count Christian had been praising him to the skies, and perhaps scolding her a little for showing so little interest in so amiable a brother.

"Come, signora," said the canoness, who, notwithstanding her little grudge against La Porporina, could not refrain from wishing her well, and who thought, moreover, that she was doing an act of duty, "you sulk with your brother a little at dinner, and it is true that at the time he deserved it; but he has proved himself better than we at first expected to find him. He loves you dearly, and has said a hundred kind things of you to us, with every expression of affection, and even of respect. Be not then more severe than we. I am sure if he remembers that he drank a little too much at dinner, he is deeply grieved at it, especially on your account. Speak to him, therefore, and do not be cold to one who is so near to you by the ties of blood. For my own part, although my brother, the Baron Frederick, who was a great torment in his younger days, often annoyed me greatly, I could never remain at variance with him an hour."

"Consuelo, who dared neither to confirm nor to destroy the error of the good lady, stood aghast at this new attack on the part of Anzoletto, all whose power and capacity she now fully appreciated.

"You do not hear what my sister is saying," said Count Christian to the young man, "but I will translate it to you in two minutes. She is blaming Consuelo for assuming too much of the airs of a little mother over you, and I am sure Consuelo is dying to make her peace with you. Embrace one another then, my children. Come, young man, it is for you to take the first step, and if you have at any time behaved ill to her, of which ill you now repent, I doubt not that she will pardon you, on your expressing your sorrow."

Anzoletto did not suffer this advice to be given to him twice over. He seized the trembling hand of Consuelo, who did not dare to withdraw it from him. "Yes," said he, "I have committed great wrongs against her, and I repent the more bitterly that I have found that all my endeavors to pardon myself against her, have only rendered me more unhappy than before. She knows this well, and if she had not a heart of iron, as proud as strength itself, she would have understood that my remorse has already punished me enough. Pardon me then, my sister, and restore me your love, or I will instantly go forth, and carry my despair, my solitude, and my weariness over the whole world. A stranger everywhere, without stay on which to lean, counsel by which to rule myself, affection which to return, I shall be no longer able to put my trust in God, and my bewilderment and my errors will rest upon your head."

This homily affected the count deeply, and drew tears from the eyes of the good canoness.

"You hear what he says, Porporina," she exclaimed, "and it is all very good, and very true. Monsieur chaplain, you ought to command Consuelo, in the name of holy religion, to be reconciled with her brother."

The chaplain was now about to interfere; but Anzoletto did not wait for discourse, but seizing Consuelo in his arms, in spite of her resistance and her fears, embraced her passionately under the very beard of the chaplain, to the great edification of the bystanders. Consuelo, entirely shocked by this last piece of impudent imposture, resolved to endure it no longer. "Hold!" she cried, "Monsieur le Comte! Listen to me!" she was about to reveal the whole fraud, when Albert entered the room. At the instant the idea of Zdenko returned to freeze up with terror her soul, which was on the point of bursting its bonds. This implacable protector of Consuelo might well determine to free her from this persecutor without any disturbance, or any deliberation, should she once invoke his protection. She turned pale, cast a glance of agonising reproach on Anzoletto, and the words expired on her tongue. As the clock struck seven, they sat down to table for supper. If the idea of these frequent meals takes away the appetite of my fair and delicate readers, I will merely observe that it was not at the time, or in the country of which I write, to abstain from eating. I believe I have said so already. At Riesen-berg they ate plentifully, slowly, and often; indeed, almost one half the day was passed at table; and I confess that, to Consuelo, accustomed as she had been from childhood upward to live daily on a few spoonful of boiled rice, these Homeric repasts did appear insufferably long. For the first time, she knew not whether this supper lasted an hour, an instant, or a century. She had no more actual life in her system than Albert when he was in his solitary cave. She almost fancied she was drunken with wine, so strangely did shame, self-reproach, love, and terror, agitate her whole being. She ate not, she saw not, she heard not aught that passed around her. Astounded, as one who feels himself rolling over the brink of a precipice, and who sees the feeble branches which alone intercept his fall, breaking under his grasp, she looked into the abyss which lay before her, and her brain swam with a wild vertigo.

Anzoletto sat beside her; he touched her garment, he pressed his elbow with convulsive movements against her elbow—his foot against her foot. In his eagerness to help her, he met her hands with his

own, and held them for a second in his clasp, but that rapid and fiery touch contained a whole century of voluptuous pleasure. He uttered to her, aside, words which seemed to choke, darted at her glances which seemed to drown. He took advantage of opportunities, brief as lightning, to exchange glances with her, and to touch that portion of the crystal which her lips had touched with his own. And all the time he knew that while to her he was all fire, he was all ice to the rest of the company. He conducted himself admirably, spoke eloquently, treated the chaplain with respect, offered him the choicest morsels of the joints, which he took care to carve with the dexterity and grace of a guest long accustomed to good cheer. He had already observed that the holy man was a gourmand, and that his shyness inflicted considerable privations on him in this respect; and the priest found himself so well cared for, and his preferences so justly observed, that he began to wish that this new and dexterous carver could be domesticated for life in the Giants' Castle.

It was observed that Anzoleto drank nothing but water, and when the chaplain, desirous of returning his good offices, asked him to take wine, he replied aloud, so that all might hear him, "A thousand thanks! I will take no more. Your good wine is a traitor, by whose aid a while since I sought to forget my griefs; now I have no griefs more, and return to water, my habitual drink, and my loyal friend."

They prolonged the evening to a later hour than usual. Anzoleto sang again, and now he sang alone for the ears of Consuelo. He chose the favorite airs of the old composers, which she had taught him herself; and he sang them with all the care, all the purity of taste, and the delicacy of intuition which she had been wont to require of him. By doing so he was recalling to her mind her dearest memories, both of her love and her art.

At the moment when they were about to separate for the night, he took an opportunity to say to her in a whisper, "I know which is your apartment. They have given me one on the same gallery. At midnight I shall be at the door on my knees, and there I shall remain prostrate until the break of day. Do not refuse to listen to me for a moment. I do not desire to win your love again, I do not deserve it. I know that you can love me no longer, that another is the happy man, and that I must depart. I shall depart with death in my heart, and the relics of my life are vowed to the muses. But do not drive me hence without saying farewell, without uttering one word of pity. If you refuse me I will go hence at break of day, and that will be the last of me forever."

"Speak not thus, Anzoleto. We may well, as we ought to do, part here. Say farewell to each other for ever. I pardon you—I wish you—"

"A pleasant journey, doubtless!" he replied, ironically; but then, immediately resuming his hypocritical tone—"You are pitiless," he said, "Consuelo. You wish me to be destroyed utterly; you wish that no last remnant of good, no single good sentiment, no touch of better hope should remain to me. What fear you? Have I not proved to you a hundred times my respect and the purity of my love? When one loves hopelessly is not he a slave, and do not you know the magical words which tames and fetters me? In the name of Heaven! if you are not the mistress of this man whom you are about to marry, if he is not the partner of your chamber, and the inevitable companion of all your nights—"

"He is not so, he never was so!" exclaimed Consuelo, with the proud accent of injured innocence.

She had done better to suppress that impulse of well-founded pride, which was, however, too mean for the occasion. Anzoletto was not a coward, but he loved life, and had he thought to find a resolute defender in Consuelo's chamber, he would have remained very quietly in his own. The accent of truthfulness, however, with which the young girl spoke, entirely emboldened him.

"In that count," said he, "I shall not endanger your prospect. I will be so prudent, so careful. I will tread so lightly, and speak so low, that your reputation shall not be stained. Moreover, am I not your brother, and what is there extraordinary in my coming to take leave of you, when I set forth before daybreak?"

"No, no; do not come!" cried Consuelo, terrified; "Count Albert's apartment is very near to mine; perhaps he has already divined everything. Anzoletto, if you so expose yourself, I will not answer for your life; I speak seriously to you, and my blood freezes in my veins."

And in truth, Anzoletto felt that her hand, which he held within his own, had become as cold as marble.

"If you raise discussions, if you keep me parleying at the door, you will expose my life," he said, with a smile; "but if your door be open, and our kisses silent, you risk nothing. Remember how many nights we have spent together at the Corte Minelli without awakening one of the numerous neighbors. As to me, if there be no obstacle but the jealousy of the count, and no other danger than death——"

At this moment Consuelo saw the eye of Count Albert, which was in general so vague and wandering, assume a clear and piercing depth, as it was fixed upon Anzoletto. He could not hear what was passing, but he seemed to read it with his eyes. She withdrew her hand from that of Anzoletto, saying, in a broken voice, "Ah, if you love me, brave not the ire of that terrible man!"

"Is it for yourself that you are afraid?" asked Anzoletto.

"No. But for every one who approaches me with threats."

"And for every one, doubtless, who adores you. Well, be it so. To die at your feet, to die before your eyes were all that I ask. I will be at your door at midnight: resist me, and you will but accelerate my doom."

"You set off to-morrow, and do you take no leave of any person?" asked Consuelo, who saw him bow to the count and the canoness, without saying anything of his departure.

"Of no one," he replied; "for they would seek to detain me, and feeling everything conspiring to prolong my agony, I should yield. You will make my excuses and adieux to them. Orders are given to my guide to have the horses ready at four in the morning."

This last assertion was scarcely the whole truth. The singular chances which Albert had cast on him for several hours had not escaped Anzoletto's penetration. He had resolved to dare all things, but he held himself ready for flight in case of any untoward circumstance. His horses were already saddled in the stable, and his guide was under orders not to go to bed.

When she returned to her own apartment, Consuelo was in a state of real consternation. She was determined not to receive Anzoletto, and at the same time she feared lest he should be prevented coming

Now that double sentiment, false yet insurmountable, tormented her mind, and arrayed her heart against her conscience. Never had she felt so unhappy, so unprotected, so utterly alone on the face of the earth. "Oh, Porpora, my master, where art thou?" she cried. "Thou alone art able to deliver me; thou alone knowest my sorrows, and the perils into which I have fallen. Thou, alone, art harsh, stern, and distrustful, as a father should be, in order to rescue me from this abyss into which I am falling! But have I no friends around me? Have not I a father in Count Christian? Have I not a mother in the canoness, if I had but the courage to brave her prejudices and address myself to her heart? And is not Albert, on the instant, my support, my brother, my husband, if I consent to speak but one word? Oh, yes! He it is that should be my savior, yet I fear and repel him! And yet I must go and find them all three," she continued, rising and walking rapidly to and fro. "I must attach myself to them, I must throw myself into their protecting arms, shelter myself under the wings of these my guardian angels. Rest, dignity, and honor dwell with them; misery and despair await me in the person of Anzoletto! Oh, yes—I must go and confess to them all that has passed during this hideous day. I must attach myself to them by an oath, I must say aloud that irrevocable *yes*, which shall set an invincible barrier between myself and my torturer. I will go and do so."

And then, instead of going, she fell back into her chair, half fainting, and wept painfully over her departed peace and her broken energy.

"And yet," she continued, "how can I tell them yet another falsehood? How can I offer to them a girl half bewildered, a wife half faithless? For in my heart I am such, and the mouth which should swear eternal fidelity to one man is newly soiled by the kiss of another; and my heart throbs wildly at the recollection! Ah! my very love for the base Anzoletto is changed no less than he. It is no longer that tranquil and holy affection with which I slept so happily under the shelter of those wings which my mother outspread from the overarching skies to shield me. It is a fascination base and untrue as the being who inspires it. There is no longer anything great or true in my soul. False to myself this morning, I have been false to others, and how shall I avoid being false to them forever? Present or absent, Anzoletto will be ever before my eyes; the mere thought of being separated from him to-morrow fills me with anguish; and on the bosom of another it is of him alone that I should dream. What shall I do—what will become of me?"

The hour approached with hideous rapidity, and yet how slowly. "I will see him," she said again. "I will tell him that I hate him, that I despise him, that I will see him no more. And yet, no; I am again deceiving myself: I should not tell him so, or if I did, it would be only to retract a moment later. I am no longer sure now of my own virtue. He believes not in it, he will respect me no longer, and I—I can no longer put trust in myself—no longer put trust in anything. I shall betray myself through terror yet, more than through weakness. Oh, rather let me die than thus fall from my own esteem, and let the cunning and the profligacy of another triumph over the holy instincts and the noble interests with which my Creator framed me."

She went to the window, and for a time felt determined on casting herself headlong, to escape the death of infamy into which she imag-

lined herself on the point of falling. As she struggled against that awful temptation, she considered the various means of safety which were left to her. So far as material means, she lacked none for she had begun by bolting the door by which Anzoletto might have gained admittance; but she only half knew that cold and selfish individual, and having seen proofs of his physical courage, she knew not that he was utterly destitute of the moral courage which leads men to run the risk of death for the indulgence of their passions. She thought that he would still dare to come to her door, that he would insist on being heard, that he would make a noise, and she knew also that a breath would awaken Albert. Adjoining to her apartment there was a closet, containing a secret stair, as there was to almost every apartment in the castle; but that staircase had its egress on the lower floor, within the chamber of the canoness. It was the only refuge she could think of from the impudent audacity of Anzoletto; and in order to have it opened to her, it would be necessary to confess everything, even beforehand, in order to prevent an outcry and bustle, which, if suddenly alarmed, the good Wenceslawa would be very likely to protract. Again, there was the garden, but if Anzoletto, who seemed to have made himself acquainted with every part of the castle, should himself repair thither, that were but to accelerate her ruin.

While she thus pondered, she saw from the window of her closet, which looked out upon the stable-yard, that there was a light in the stables; and she observed a man going in and out of the stables, without alarming any of the other servants, and appearing to be engaged in preparations for departure. She recognised him by his garb as Anzoletto's guide, harnessing his horses agreeably to his instructions; and she also observed a light in the drawbridge-keeper's lodge, and thought rightly enough that he had been informed by the guide of their intended departure, the hour of which was not as yet determined. While she observed these details, and abandoned herself to a thousand conjectures, a thousand projects, Consuelo fell upon a very strange, and no less rash device. But as it offered her an intermediate resource between the two extreme counsels that lay before her, and opened a new view of the limits of her future life, she regarded it as an actual inspiration of Heaven. She had no time to examine means at her leisure, and reflect on their consequences. Some appeared to present themselves to her as the effects of a providential chance, others, she thought, might easily be turned against herself. She began then very hastily to write as follows, for the castle clock was already striking eleven.

"ALBERT—I am compelled to depart. I esteem you with my whole soul, as you well know; but there is in my very existence, contradictory, rebellious, painful principles, which I can explain neither to you nor to myself. If I could see you at this moment, I should tell you that I put my trust in you, that I surrender to you the care of my future life, that I consent to become your wife. Perhaps I should tell you that I wish to become so. And yet I should mislead you, or take a rash oath; for my heart is not sufficiently purified of its ancient love to belong to you, without apprehension, and to deserve yours without remorse. I fly, I go to Vienna to meet Porpora, or to wait his coming, since he must needs arrive in a few days, as his letter to your father recently announced. I swear to you, that my object is

seeking him out is to find in his presence hatred and oblivion of the past, and the hope of a futurity of which, believe me, you are the corner-stone. Follow me not, I forbid you, in the name of that futurity which your impatience would compromise, perchance destroy. Await me, and keep the oath you made me, that you would not return without me to —, you understand me! Have trust in me, I command you, for I depart with the holy hope of returning to you, or summoning you to me ere long. At this moment I am in a hideous dream; I fancy that were I by myself I should awaken worthy of you. I do not desire that my brother should follow me; I intend to deceive him, and suffer him to take a road different from that which I shall follow. By all that you hold dearest in the world, throw no obstacles in the way of my undertaking, and believe me to be sincere. It is thus that I shall learn whether you truly love me, and whether I may, without blushing, sacrifice my poverty to your wealth, my obscurity to your rank, my ignorance to the science of your intellect. To prove to you that I do not go without the intention to return, will say not, 'Fare-you-well, Albert:' but 'we shall meet again;' and I charge you with the task of rendering your dear aunt propitious to our union, and of preserving to me the favor of your father, the best and most respectable of men. Tell him the true state of all this. I will write to you from Vienna."

The hope of convincing and tranquillizing a man so much in love as Albert, by such a letter, was rash, undoubtedly, but not unreasonable. Consuelo felt, while she was writing to him, the energy of his will and the uprightness of his character. All that she wrote to him she indeed thought; all that she declared her intention of doing, she intended to do. She had faith in the extraordinary penetration of Albert, almost in his second sight; she did not believe herself capable of deceiving him; she felt certain that he would believe her, and that, taking his character into consideration, he would punctually obey her. At this moment she judged of circumstances, and of Albert himself, as highly as he would have done. After folding her letter, without sealing it, she threw her travelling cloak over her shoulders, wrapped her head in a thick black veil, took with her what little money she possessed, and a slender change of linen, and going down stairs on tip-toe, with incredible precaution passed along the lower floors, reached Count Christian's apartment, introduced herself even into his oratory, whither she knew he came at six o'clock every morning. Here she laid the letter on the desk whereon he always placed his book, before kneeling on the ground; and then passing onward to the great court, without awakening any one, walked directly to the stables.

The guide, who was not in the most comfortable state of mind at finding himself alone at the dead of night in the great castle, with all the world sleeping like stones around him, was very much terrified at first, on seeing this black woman advance upon him like a spectre. He retreated to the very bottom of the stable without daring either to cry out or to address her. That was precisely what Consuelo desired; as soon as she saw that she was out of eyesight and earshot—she was aware, by the way, that neither Albert's nor Anzoleto's windows looked out upon the court—she said to him, "I am the sister of the young man whom you guided hither this morning. He is about to carry me off. We have just decided on it together. Put a lady's

saddle on my horse—there are several here. Follow me to Tusta, without saying a single word, and without taking a single step that the people of the castle shall be able to hear. You shall be paid double. Why do you look astonished? Make haste. So soon as you shall arrived at that town, you will come back here with the same horses to fetch my brother.”

The guide shook his head.

“You shall be paid treble.”

The guide made a sign that he consented.

“And you shall bring him on at full speed to Tusta, where I will await you!”

The guide shook his head.

“You shall have four times as much, the last, as the first time.”

The guide obeyed. In a moment the horse which Consuelo was to ride was equipped with a lady’s saddle. “Give me your hat, and throw your cloak over mine. It is but for the moment.”

“I understand; to deceive the porter; that is easy enough. You are not the first young lady I have helped to carry off. Your lover will pay well for it—for all you are his sister,” he added with a knowing expression.

“You will be well paid by me, in the first instance. Silence! Are you ready?”

“I am on horseback. Go on before me, and make them lower the draw-bridge.”

They passed it at a foot’s pace, made a circuit, in order to avoid riding under the castle walls, and in a quarter of an hour reached the great high road. Consuelo had never in her life been on horseback before. Fortunately, though strong and active, the animal on which she was mounted was good-tempered. His master animated him by chirruping, and he fell into a firm and steady gallop, which, through woods and over heath-clad moors, brought our heroine to her journey’s end within two hours. Consuelo kept hold of her bridle, and dismounted at the entrance of the town.

“I do not wish to be seen here,” said she to the guide, as she handed him the price agreed upon for herself and Anzoletto. “I will pass through the town on foot, and will procure from some people whom I know, a carriage to convey me on the route toward Prague. I shall travel with all speed, in order to get as far as possible from the country where my face is known, before daylight. As soon as it is day, I shall stop and wait for my brother.”

“But where will you do so?”

“I cannot say. But tell him that it will be at a post-house. Let him ask no questions until he is thirty miles from this place, and then let him ask everywhere for Madame Wolf. It is the first name I can think of; do not forget it. There is but one road to Prague, is there?”

“Only one, until you——”

“That is well. Stop in the suburbs to feed your horses, and try to hinder them from seeing the woman’s saddle—throw your cloak over it, and set out again. Wait—one word more. Tell my brother not to hesitate, but to steal away without being seen; his life is in danger in the castle.”

“Heaven go with you, pretty lady,” replied the guide, who had found time to roll the money which he had received, between his fingers, and to estimate its value. “If my poor horses be used up by this, I am glad that I have been of service to you.”

Having given his horses some oats, and administered to himself a copious draught of hydromel, as he said, in order to open his eyes, the guide took his road back toward Riesenbergl, without especially hurrying himself, as Consuelo had hoped and foreseen, even at the very time when she was urging him to use all possible despatch; involving his brain as he went in every sort of wild conjecture concerning the romantic adventure in which he had been engaged, and half inclined to believe that his late travelling companion had been no other than the far-famed Castle Ghost, the black phantom of the Schreckenstein.

CHAPTER LXII.

ANZOLETO had not failed to rise at midnight, to take his stiletto, perfume himself, and put out his light. But when he thought to open his door without making the least noise—for he already remarked that the lock was easy, and played gently—he was astonished to find that the key was not susceptible of the slightest movement. He strained his fingers, and exerted all his strength in vain, even at the risk of awaking every one in the house, by shaking the door too hard. All was useless. There was no other issue to his room; the window looked over the gardens from a height of fifty feet, the walls perfectly bare and unscaleable. The very thought of the attempt made him dizzy.

“This is not the work of chance,” said Anzoleto, after having again vainly attempted to open the door. “Whether it be Consuelo—and that would be a good symptom, for fear betrays the consciousness of weakness—or Albert, they shall pay me for it, both at the same time.”

He endeavored thereupon to go to sleep again; but spite prevented him, and perhaps also a certain sentiment not far removed from fear. If Albert was the author of this precaution, he alone of all in the house, had not been taken in by his pretended relationship with Consuelo. She, moreover, had been really alarmed when she warned him to beware of that terrible man. Anzoleto endeavored vainly to argue himself into the belief that, being mad, the young count had no power of connecting his ideas, or that, being of so high birth, he would decline, in accordance with the prejudices of the time, to engage with an actor in an affair of honor. But all these arguments failed to reassure him, for Albert, if insane at all, had shown himself perfectly tranquil, and in all respects master of himself; and as to his prejudices, they could not be very deeply rooted, if he could think of marrying an actress. Anzoleto, therefore began to fear seriously that he should have a quarrel to settle with him before his departure, and that some bad business would occur, ending in a clear loss. This termination he regarded, however, as disgraceful rather than dangerous; for he had learned to handle the sword, and flattered himself that he could hold his own against any man, noble or not. Nevertheless, he felt himself ill at ease, and he did not sleep.

Toward five in the morning, he fancied he heard steps in the passage, and a short time afterward, the door of his room was opened,

with some noise and some difficulty. It was not yet clear day, and seeing a man come into his room with small ceremony, Anzoletto thought that the decisive moment had arrived. He sprang up, stiletto in hand, with the bound of a wild bull; but he almost instantly recognised in the morning twilight the figure of his guide making him signs to speak low, and make no noise.

"What do you mean by these grimaces, you fool? and what do you want with me?" asked Anzoletto, angrily. "How did you contrive to get in here?"

"How, my good sir? Why, by the door, to be sure."

"The door was locked."

"But you had left the key on the outside."

"Impossible! There it is on my table."

"It is very odd, but there are two."

"And who can have played me the trick of locking me up here. Was it you, when you came for my portmanteau?"

"I swear it was not I! And I have not even seen a key."

"It must have been the devil, then! But what do you come hither for, with that frightened and mysterious face? I have not called for you."

"You do not give me time to speak. You see me, however, and know, doubtless, what I want. The signora reached Tusta, and in compliance with her orders, here am I with my horses, ready to convey you thither."

Some minutes passed before Anzoletto could be brought to comprehend what was going forward. But he guessed at the truth quickly enough to prevent his guide, whose superstitious fears in regard to the devil were passing away with the gloom of night, from falling back upon his terrors. He had begun by examining and sounding all the money which Consuelo had given him upon the pavement of the stable, and he held himself perfectly satisfied with his infernal bargain. Anzoletto now understood at a glance, and supposing that the fugitive might have been, on her side, so far watched that she could not inform him of her resolution; that, menaced and driven to extremities by her lover's jealousy, she had seized a propitious moment to rid herself of his authority, had escaped, and taken to the country. "At all events," said he, "there is no time for doubt or hesitation. The instructions which she has sent me by this man, are clear enough. Victoria! If I can now only get out of this place to overtake her without having to cross swords, all will be well."

He armed himself to the teeth, and while he was dressing in all haste, he sent the guide before him to see that the ways were clear. On his reply that all the world appeared to be sound asleep, with the exception of the keeper of the drawbridge, who had just lowered it for him, Anzoletto descended stealthily, mounted his horse, and only saw a single groom in the court, whom he called up to him, and gave him some money, in order that his departure might not bear the resemblance of a flight.

"By Saint Wenceslaus!" said the man, "this is a strange affair. The horses are covered with sweat on their first coming out of the stable, as if they had been ridden hard all night."

"It is your black devil who has been currying them in the night," replied the guide.

"It must be so, I think," said the other; "for I heard a hideous noise in this direction all night long. I did not dare to come to see,

but I heard the portcullis creak, and the drawbridge fall just as clearly as I see you at this moment, so much so that I thought it was you who were going, and hardly expected to see you here this morning."

At the drawbridge the observation was repeated.—"Is your lordship then double?" asked the porter, rubbing his eyes. "I saw you set forth about midnight, and now you are setting forth again."

"You have been dreaming, my good man," said Anzoletto, making a present to him also. "I should not have gone without asking you to drink my health."

"Your lordship does me too much honor," said the porter, who murdered Italian a little. "All one for that!" he added to the guide in their own tongue. "I have seen two of them to-night."

"Take care then that you don't see four to-morrow night;" replied the guide, following Anzoletto across the bridge at a gallop. "The black devil plays just such tricks to folks who sleep like you."

Anzoletto, well warned and well instructed by his guide, speedily reached Tusta. He passed through it after having dismissed his man and hired post-horses, abstained from asking any questions until he had travelled ten leagues, and at the place so indicated on stopping to breakfast, he enquired for Madam Wolf, whom he expected to find there with a carriage. No one could give him any intelligence of her, and for a right good reason. There was but one Madam Wolf in the place, but she had resided in the house fifty years, and kept a milliner's shop. Anzoletto worn out and exhausted, fancied that Consuelo must have feared to halt so soon. He asked to hire a carriage, but could not find one. In spite of his teeth he was compelled again to take horse, and to pursue his way at a hard gallop. He fancied it impossible but that he must overtake the longed-for carriage at every step, into which he could spring, and compensate himself for all his fatigues; but he met very few travellers, and in none of the carriages did he see Consuelo. At length overcome with weariness, and finding it impossible to hire a carriage any where, he determined to stop, mortally annoyed, and to wait in a small hamlet by the roadside, for Consuelo to overtake him; for he had now made up his mind that he must have passed her on the road. He had plenty of time during all the remainder of that day, and all the following night, to curse the roads and inns in general, and jealous persons and women in particular. On the following day he found a public conveyance travelling to the northward, and proceeded, unhappily enough, on the road toward Prague. We will leave him pressing on toward the north—a prey to real rage, and to desperate impatience blended with hope,—in order to return ourselves for a few minutes to the castle, and to see the effect of Consuelo's departure on its inhabitants.

It may well be believed that Count Albert was no better able to sleep, than the two other persons engaged in that singular adventure. After having provided himself with a master-key to Anzoletto's apartment, he had locked him in from without, and felt no more uneasiness as to his proceedings—well knowing that unless Consuelo herself should do so, no one else would go to his delivery. In regard to the former contingency, the very idea of which made him shudder, Albert had the excessive delicacy not to attempt any imprudent discovery. "If she loves him to that degree," he thought, "it is not for me to strive against it. I have only to let my lot be accomplished. I shall not have long to wait, for she is secure; and to-morrow she will openly refuse the offers I made her to-day. If she is only persecuted and

threatened by this dangerous man,—at all events she is safe now from his pursuit, for one night at least. Now, whatever smothered sounds I may hear around me, I will not stir. Never will I play the base part of a spy; nor will I inflict on the unhappy girl the agony of shame, by appearing before her without being called for. No, I will not play the coward part of a spy, nor of one jealously suspicious, since up to this time her refusals and irresolution, give me no claim upon her whatsoever. I know but one thing consolatory to my honor, though alarming to my love—that I shall not be deceived. Soul of her I adore—thou who dwellest at one time in the bosom of the most perfect of women, and in the heart of the universal God, if, through the mysteries and shadows of the human thought, you can read my feelings at this moment, thine inward sentiment will tell thee that I love too much not to believe thee!”

And courageously and religiously Albert kept the engagement which he had taken within himself, and although he thought he heard Consuelo's steps, as she passed along the lower floor at the time of her flight, as well as some inexplicable noise in the direction of the portcullis, he remained quiet, though in agony, praying, and holding his hands clasped over his breast, as if to hinder his heart from bursting its confinement. When the day broke, he heard some one walking and doors opening towards Anzoletto's chamber. “The infamous wretch!” said he; “he leaves her without shame or precaution. He seems even desirous of rendering his victory publicly notorious. Ah! for the injury he does me I would care nothing, were it not that another soul—nobler and dearer than my own, is contaminated by his love.”

At the hour when the Count Christian was wont to arise, Albert went to his apartment, not to inform him of what had passed, but to prevail on him to seek a farther explanation from Consuelo. He was sure that she would not stoop to falsehood. He thought that she would even desire the explanation, and was planning how to console her trouble—to reconcile her even to her shame, and to feign a resignation, which should soften the bitterness of their adieux. Albert asked himself not, what would become of him thereafter? He felt that either his reason or his life would give way under such a shock, and he feared not the experience of suffering greater than this endurance.

He met his father just as he was entering the oratory. The letter laid upon the desk attracted both their eyes at the same moment. They seized and read it together. The old man was thunderstruck, thinking that Albert would not be able to endure it. But Albert, who had prepared himself for a yet greater calamity, was calm, resigned, and firm in his confidence.

“She is pure,” said he; “she desires to love me. She feels that my love is true, and my faith impregnable. God will save her from danger. Let us accept this promise, my father, and let us be tranquil; fear nothing for me. I shall be stronger than my grief, and I will master my anxieties should they attack me.”

“My son,” said the old man tenderly. “Here we stand before the image of the God of thy fathers. Thou hast adopted a different creed, and I have never blamed them angrily, though thou knowest that they have caused my heart to bleed. I am about to prostrate myself before the effigy of that God, before whom I promised thee during the past night, to do all that depends on me to bring about the

success of thy love, and its ratification on honorable terms. I have kept my promise, and I renew it. I am about to pray again to the All Powerful, that He will grant thy prayers, and that mine shall not stand at variance with thine. Wilt thou not then join with me in this solemn hour, which perhaps shall decide in heaven the fate of thy love here on earth? O, then, my noble son, whom the Lord has given grace to retain all thy virtues, in spite of the trials to which he has subjected thy former faith—thou, whom I have seen in thy early infancy kneeling by my side on thy mother's tomb, and praying, like a young-eyed angel, to that Sovereign Master, whom thou hadst not then learned to doubt—wilt thou refuse to lift thy voice to Him this day, that mine may not be useless?"

"My father," replied Albert, clasping him in his arms; "if our faith differ as to forms and dogmas, our souls will forever be agreed on the existence of a divine and eternal principle. You serve a God of wisdom and of goodness, an ideal of perfection, of knowledge, and of justice, whom I never have ceased to adore. O, thou crucified Divinity," he cried, kneeling beside his father before the image of the Redeemer; "Thou whom men adore as the Word, and whom I revere as the noblest and most perfect specimen of universal love among us, listen to my prayer, Thou whose thoughts dwell eternally in God and in us! Bless our just instincts and upright endeavors! Pity the perversity which is triumphant, and sustain the innocence which resists. Let that come of my happiness which God will! But oh, incarnate Deity, let thy influence direct and encourage those hearts which have no other strength and no other consolation than thy sojourn, and thy example here on earth."

CHAPTER LXIII.

ANOLETO pursued his route to Prague wholly to no purpose; for no sooner had she given the guide the false instructions, which she considered necessary to the success of her enterprise, than Consuelo struck into a cross-road, which she knew, from having traversed it twice in a carriage with the baroness Amella, when going to the neighboring chateau of Tauss. That chateau was the farthest point to which the few excursions that she had made from Riesenbergl, had extended. Therefore, the aspect of that district, and the direction of the roads had occurred to her, so soon as she had conceived the idea of flight. She remembered that, while walking on the terrace of the castle, the lady to whom it belonged had said to her, while she was pointing out the vast extent of beautiful country, which was to be seen stretching out to the horizon—"that fine road, with an avenue of trees, which you see below there, and which fades out of sight on the horizon, joins the great Southern Road, and it is by it that we go to Vienna." Consuelo, with that direction and clear recollection on her mind, was certain of not losing her way, and of regaining the road by which she had herself entered Bohemia, at no inordinate distance. She reached the park of Biela—skirted the walls of the park—discovered, without much difficulty, notwithstanding the darkness of the night, the road with its avenue of trees, and before day broke had ene-

ceeded in setting between herself and the place which she wished to leave behind, a space of at least three leagues as the crow flies. Young, healthy, active, and accustomed from her childhood to long walks, supported, moreover, by an energetic will, she saw the day dawn without having experienced the least fatigue. The heaven was serene,—the roads dry, and covered with smooth soft sand. The gallop of the horse, to which she was not accustomed, had shaken her a good deal; but it is well known that foot exercise in such cases is better than rest, and that with energetic temperaments, one kind of weariness is the cure for the other. Nevertheless, as the stars began to pale in the skies and the twilight grew clearer and clearer, she began to feel alarmed at her loneliness. She had been perfectly composed and at her ease during the darkness—for constantly on thorns from the apprehension of being pursued, she knew that she was always safe, through her power of concealing herself before she should be discovered. But now that it was day, having to traverse wide tracts of open country, she did not dare to follow the beaten track, the rather that she saw groups in all directions afar off, scattered like small black points along the whitish line which the road described, by its contrast with the dark country over which it ran. At so short a distance from Riesenbergshe might be recognized by the first passer-by, and she determined to turn into a path, which looked as if it would shorten her road, by cutting off at right angles a circuit, which the causeway here made around a hill.—She walked thus for nearly an hour without meeting any person, and entered a woody piece of ground, in which she felt now that she should be able to conceal herself from prying eyes. “If I could gain a start of eight or ten leagues thus without being discovered, I should then walk at my ease along the high road, and on the first opportunity, I could hire a carriage and horses.”

This thought made her put her hand into her purse, to calculate how much money remained to her, after her liberal payment of the guide, who had brought her from Riesenbergshe for the prosecution of her long and difficult journey. She had not taken time to reflect coolly, and it is doubtful whether, if she had made all the reflections which prudence should have suggested, she would ever have resolved on this adventurous flight. But what was her consternation and surprise at perceiving that her slender purse was much lighter than she had imagined. In her haste, she had either carried away but half the small sum which she possessed, or in the confusion and darkness, she had paid the guide gold instead of silver. So that, after counting and recounting her coins without being able to deceive herself on the trivial sum which they contained, she came to the conviction that she could reach Vienna only by travelling the whole way on foot.

This discovery at first discouraged her not a little, not so much on account of the fatigue, which she did not fear, but of the dangers which, to a young woman, are inseparable from a long journey on foot. This fear, which she had hitherto overcome by saying to herself that she would soon shelter herself from all the dangers of the high road by taking a carriage, began to address her louder than she had expected during the first excitement of her overwrought ideas; and, as if overcome for the first time in her life by the consciousness of her poverty and weakness, she began to walk as quickly as she could, seeking the shade of the deepest coppices, as if in these she could find an asylum from her uneasiness. To increase her distress, she soon found that

she was following no regularly beaten track, and that she was wandering at hazard through a wood which was becoming at every step thicker and thicker. If the dead solitude of the place, in some respects, relieved her fears, the uncertainty of her direction alarmed her on another point,—for she might be unconsciously returning on her steps and drawing nearer to the Giants' Castle. Anzoletto might be there still; a suspicion, an accident, a thought of vengeance against Albert, might any of them have retained him? And again, had she not reason to fear Albert himself, in the first moments of his surprise and despair? Consuelo was well satisfied that he would submit himself to her decision, but if she were to be seen in the vicinity of the castle, and if the young count were to hear of her being within reach, would he not hasten to her with the hope of bringing her back by his tears and supplications? Would it be just, then, to expose this noble youth, his family, nay, even her own pride, to the ridicule of an enterprise undertaken only to fail as quickly? Moreover, it was not unlikely that Anzoletto would return in a few days, and bring back that inextricable confusion of embarrassments and dangers, which she had severed by a bold and generous stroke of decision. It was better, therefore, to brave all, and expose herself to all, than to return to Riesenbergh.

Determined then to make her way to Vienna at all hazards, she stopped at a shadowy and solitary spot, where a living spring gushed out from among umbrageous trees and moss-grown rocks. The soil around was pounced, and cut up by the footmarks of many animals. Was it that the flocks of the neighborhood, or the beasts of the forest came, from time to time, to quench their thirst at that secluded spring? Consuelo drew nigh to it, and, kneeling on the damp stone, drank joyfully of that clear and ice-cold water. Then, remaining on her bended knees, she meditated for a little while on her situation. "I am very foolish," she thought, "and very vain, if I cannot accomplish what I have set out to do. What, then, has the daughter of my mother become so effeminate by the luxuries of life, that she dare not encounter the heat of the sun, hunger, fatigue, or danger? Are these, then, all my dreams and longings after poverty and freedom, when in the midst of wealth, which seemed only to oppress me, and from which I longed to extricate myself? And am I now terror-stricken at the first step I have taken? Is not this the trade to which I was born—to travel, to dare, and to suffer?" and what is then changed about me since the days when I used to wander with my mother, often ahungered, quenching our thirst in the little wayside fountains, and gaining strength from the draught? What dangers did I fear with my mother? Was she not wont to say to me when we met ominous-looking characters, 'Fear nothing. Those who possess nothing, nothing threatens, and the miserable war not upon the miserable?' Courage, then, courage! I will on; for this day, I have nothing to fear but hunger. I will not, therefore, this day enter a cottage to beg bread, until I shall be far, far away, and night shall have covered the earth. A day will be passed speedily. When it becomes hot, and my limbs wax faint, I will recall to mind that axiom of philosophy which I have heard so often in my childhood—'he who sleeps, dines.' I will hide myself in some hollow of the rocks, and then shall see my poor mother, who watchest over me now, and voyagest by my side, invisible, that I still know how to take my siesta on the bare earth without a pillow. Courage. I will on!"

And as she spoke, Consuelo tried to rise; but, after three or four attempts to leave that wild and lovely spring, the sweet murmur of which seemed to invite repose, the sleep which she had purposed to defer, until afternoon crept upon her heavy eyelids, and hunger, which she was not so much accustomed to endure as she imagined, increased her sense of exhaustion. She strove to disguise this from herself in vain. She had eaten scarce anything on the previous evening: anxiety and agitation had conquered her appetite. A veil now seemed to be drawn over her eyes—a chill and heavy perspiration broke out on her languid limbs, and, without being conscious of it, she yielded gradually to weariness; and, while in the very act of forming a resolution to arise at once and proceed on her journey, her frame surrendered itself to the necessity of sleep—her head fell back on her little travelling bag, and she fell sound asleep on the grass.

The sun, red and hot, as he is seen sometimes in the summer skies of Bohemia, climbed the heavens gaily; the fountain bubbled over its pebbles, as if it would have lulled the slumber of the wayfarer with its monotonous song, and the birds fluttered from twig to twig singing their lively strains above her unconscious head.

CHAPTER LXIV.

It was nearly three o'clock before the forgetful girl awoke, nor then until another sound than that of the fountain, and the merry birds disturbed her from her lethargy. She half opened her eyes, without having as yet the power to arise, and saw, scarce two paces from her, a man bending over the spring and drinking as she had done but a short time before, without more ceremony than merely applying his lips to the stream. Consuelo's first feeling was of alarm, but the second glance which she cast upon the intruder on her privacy, removed her apprehensions. For, whether he had observed the features of the fair traveller at his leisure before she awoke, or whether he took no care about her, it is certain that he seemed to take but little notice of her. Beside, he was in fact rather a boy than a man. He seemed to be about fifteen, or at most sixteen years of age—was small for his years, tawny and sun-burned, and his face, which was neither handsome nor the reverse, showed nothing at that moment but quiet indifference.

By an instinctive movement, Consuelo drew her veil over her features, and made no alteration in her position, thinking that, if the traveller should pay no more attention to her than he at this moment seemed disposed to do, it would be the better way to feign sleep, and to avoid embarrassing questions. Through her veil, however, she could distinctly see all his movements, expecting momentarily to see him take up his knapsack, and proceed on his way.

Soon, however, she saw that he intended to rest a while also, and even to break his fast; for he opened his wallet, took out of it a large piece of brown bread, which he proceeded to cut, and eat with a hearty appetite. While doing this, he cast, from time to time, a shy and deferential glance on the fair sleeper, and took special care not to awaken her suddenly, as appeared by the gentleness with which he

closed the spring of his clasp-knife. This mark of deference restored complete confidence to Consuelo, and the sight of the bread, which her companion was eating with such a relish, turned her thoughts to her own hunger. After having satisfied herself, by an examination of the boy's disordered dress, and dusty shoes, that he was a poor country traveller, she took it into her head that he was an unexpected aid sent to her by Providence, by whom she was bound to profit. The piece of bread was beyond what he could need; and, without limiting his own appetite, he could easily spare her a portion. She arose, therefore, and affecting to draw her hand across her eyes, as if she had just awakened, and look at the boy with a steady and assured eye, as if to influence him should he show any signs of altering the respectful demeanor he had thus far shown her. But of this precaution there was no need. For so soon as he saw her standing up, the boy was at first a little embarrassed, lowered his eyes, and after raising them and letting them fall several times in succession, at length, encouraged by the kind and sympathizing expression of Consuelo's face, in spite of all her desire to keep it grave, he ventured to address her in a voice so gentle and harmonious, that the young *cantatrice* was involuntarily predisposed in his favor. "Well, mademoiselle," he said, with a smile, "so you are awake at last? You were sleeping there so comfortably, that, if it had not been for the fear of seeming impertinent, I should have done as much myself."

"You are as obliging as you are polite," said Consuelo, assuming a sort of maternal tone towards him. "You shall do me a little service, if you will."

"Whatever you please," said the young wayfarer, to whom Consuelo's voice appeared no less agreeable than his had been to her.

"You shall sell me a little portion of your breakfast," said Consuelo, "if you can spare it."

"Sell it to you!" cried the boy, astonished, and blushing deeply. "Oh! if I had a breakfast, I would not sell it to you! I am not an inn-keeper, but I would offer it, and give it to you."

"You will give to me, then, on condition that I give you enough to procure a better breakfast?"

"No indeed! no indeed!" replied he. "You are joking, I suppose; or are you too proud to accept a poor bit of bread from me; you see that I have nothing else to offer."

"Well, I accept it," said Consuelo, extending her hand for it; "the goodness of your heart should make me blush, were I to show too much pride."

"Take it, take it, beautiful lady," cried the young man delighted. "Take the bread and the knife, and cut for yourself, but pray don't spare it. I am not much of an eater, and that should have lasted me all my day's journey."

"But have you enough wherewithal to purchase more for your journey?"

"Cannot one get bread everywhere? Come, eat, I pray you, if you would oblige me."

Consuelo did not wait to be requested any farther, and feeling that it would be a poor requital to her brotherly entertainer to refuse to eat in his company, she sat down not far from him, and began to eat the bread, in comparison of which, the richest and most delicate meats she had ever tasted, appeared coarse and vapid.

"What an excellent appetite you have," said the boy. "It does

one good to see you eat. Well, I am very happy to have met you. In fact, it makes me perfectly happy to have done so. Come take my advice, let us eat it all. We shall find some house on our road to-day, although this country seems to be a desert."

"You are not acquainted with it then?" said Consuelo, indifferently.

"It is the first time I have travelled it this way, though I know the road from Vienna to Pilsen, over which I have just travelled, and which I shall follow on my way down yonder again."

"Down yonder—do you mean to Vienna!"

"Yes, to Vienna; are you going thither also?"

Consuelo, who was hesitating whether she should take this boy as a travelling companion, or avoid him, pretended to be thinking of something else, so as to avoid answering.

"Bah! what am I thinking about?" said the youth, correcting himself. "A beautiful young lady like yourself would not be going alone to Vienna. And yet you are travelling somewhere, for you have a package, and are on foot as I am."

Consuelo, who was determined to avoid his questions, until such time as she should discover how far he was to be trusted, answered his question by another question, "Do you live at Pilsen?"

"No," replied the boy, who had neither cause nor inclination to be distrustful, "I am from Rohrau in Hungary. My father is a wheelwright by trade."

"And how came you to be travelling so far from home? You do not follow your father's business, then?"

"Yes, and no. My father is a wheelwright, and I am not; but he is a musician, and so do I hope to be."

"A musician,—bravo!—that is an honorable profession."

"Perhaps you are one also—are you?"

"But you were not going to study music at Pilsen; it is said to be a gloomy garrison town."

"Oh! no. I was entrusted with a commission to do there, and am on my way back to Vienna, where I hope to earn my living, while I continue my musical studies."

"What style have you adopted—vocal, or instrumental?"

"A little of both. I have a pretty good voice, and I have a poor little violin yonder with which I can make myself understood. But my ambition has a wider range, and I wish to go farther than this."

"Perhaps to compose?"

"You have said it. I have nothing in my head but this confounded composition. I will show you that I have a good travelling companion in my wallet. It is a great book, which I have cut to pieces in order to carry it the more easily about the country; and when I am tired and sit down to rest, I amuse myself by studying it. That, in itself, rests me."

"A very good idea; and I would lay a wager it is the *Gradus ad Parnassum* of Fuchs."

"Exactly. Ah! I see you know all about it; and I am sure, now, that you are a musician as well as I. Just now as I looked at you, while you were asleep, I said to myself—that is not a German face; it is a Southern face—perhaps Italian—and what pleases me more, it is an artist's face; therefore, it gave me much pleasure when you asked me for some of my bread; and now I see that you have a foreign accent, though you speak German as well as may be."

"You may be deceived. You have not a German face either—you have the complexion of an Italian, and yet——"

"Oh! mademoiselle, you are too good. I have the complexion of an African; and my companions in the choir at St. Stephen's used to call me the Moor. But to return to what I was saying,—when I first found you asleep in the middle of the wood, I was a good deal surprised, and then I made up a hundred fancies about you. It is, perhaps, thought I, my good star which has brought me hither to find a kind heart that will assist me. At last—may I tell you all?"

"Say on without fear."

"Seeing you too well dressed, and too fair skinned to be a poor stroller, yet seeing, at the same time, that you had a parcel, I imagined that you must be some one attached to another person—a foreigner herself, and an artist—oh! a very great artist is she whom I wish to see, and whose protection would be my salvation and my happiness. Come, mademoiselle, confess truly! You live at some neighboring chateau, and are going or returning with some little commission in the neighborhood, and you know, do you not—oh! yes, you must know the Giants' Castle?"

"What, Riesenberg? Are you going to Riesenberg?"

"I am trying, at least, to go thither; for I have lost my way in the midst of this accursed wood, in spite of all the directions they gave me at Klatau, and I do not know how to get out of it. Fortunately, you know Riesenberg, and you will tell me if I have passed it."

"But what are you going to do at Riesenberg?"

"I am going to see the Porporina."

"Indeed!" and fearing to discover herself to a stranger who might well speak of her at the Giants' Castle, Consuelo asked indifferently,—"And who is this Porporina, if you please?"

"What! do you not know? Alas! I see that you are entirely a stranger in this country; but since you are a musician, and know the name of Fuchs, you must also know that of Porpora?"

"And do you know Porpora?"

"Not yet; and it is for that end that I wish to obtain the patronage of his beloved and famous pupil, the Signora Porporina."

"Tell me what put that idea into your head, and perhaps I may try with you to approach this castle, and find this Porporina."

"I will tell you my whole history. I am, as I have told you, the son of a worthy wheelwright, and native of a little hamlet on the borders of Austria and Hungary. My father is sacristan and organist in the village, and my mother, who was cook to a nobleman in the neighborhood, has a fine voice, and in the evening when their work was done my father used to accompany her on the harp. Thus I naturally acquired a taste for music; and I remember when I was a mere child, my greatest pleasure was to play my part at these family concerts, by scraping upon a piece of wood with a lath, which I imagined to be a violin and bow, and from which I fancied that I was drawing splendid sounds. Oh! yes, it seems to me yet, that my beloved sticks were not voiceless, and that a divine voice, which the others heard not, spread itself forth around me, and intoxicated me with celestial harmonies.

"Our cousin Franck, who is schoolmaster at Hamburg, came to visit on a day when I was playing on my imaginary violin, and was very much amused at the ecstasy in which I was plunged. He asserted that it was a sure presage of an extraordinary musical talent,

and he carried me to Hamburg, where, for three years, he gave me a very rough musical education : assure you. How many beautiful organ stops, with notes and flourishes, has he not executed on my ears and fingers with his directing rod, in order to make me keep time. Nevertheless I was not to be disgusted. I learned to read and to write. I had a real violin, on which I learned the elements of music, as well as of singing, and those of the Latin language. I also made as rapid progress as was possible, with a master who had a little more courage than my cousin Franck.

"I was about eight years old when chance, or rather Providence, in whom, as a good Christian, I have always had full faith, brought Master Reuter, the chapel master of the cathedral at Vienna, to my cousin's house. I was introduced to him as a little prodigy, and when I had very easily read off a bit of music before him, he admitted me to his friendship, carried me with him to Vienna, and had me entered as a chorister in the Cathedral of St. Stephen's.

"We had only two hours a day of work then, and the rest of our time given up to ourselves, we were allowed to vagabondise at our own pleasure; but happily my passion overpowered both the tastes for dissipation, and the indolence of a child. When I was playing in the public squares with my fellows, no sooner did I hear the notes of the organ, than I left all to run back to the church and revel in the songs and harmonies. I forgot myself whole evenings in the streets, before the windows of houses whence issued the interrupted sounds of a concert, or even the melodious accents of a single voice. I was greedy of knowing and understanding whatever came to my ear. Above all, I wanted to compose. Before I was thirteen, without the knowledge of a single rule, I ventured to write a mass, the *partition* of which I showed to Master Reuter. He laughed at me, and advised me to learn before I should begin to create. It was very easy for him to say, —but I had no means of paying a master, and my parents were too poor to pay at the same time for my support and my musical education! At last, I received from them one day six florins, with which I purchased the book you see, and that of Mattheson; I began to study them diligently, and with intense gratification. My voice improved, and at length came to be considered the best in the choir. In the midst of the doubts and uncertainties of ignorance which I labored hard to dispel, I felt that my brain was developing itself, and that ideas were budding within me; but I was approaching the age when, in conformity with the rules of the chapel, I must leave the choir, and without resources, patronage, and masters, I began to ask myself whether these eight years of teaching in the cathedral were not going to prove my last studies, and whether I should not be compelled to return home to my parents and learn the trade of a wheelwright. To increase my vexation, I saw that Master Reuter, instead of treating me with kindness, or interesting himself in me, was harsh and rough, and seemed anxious only to get rid of me. I knew not the cause of his antipathy, which I am sure I never merited. Some of my companions were so flighty as to say that he was jealous of me, because he found in my essays at composition a sort of revelation of the musical instincts, and that he was ever wont to hate and discourage young persons in whom he discovered an inspiration more vivid than his own. I am far from accepting this vain-glorious interpretation of my disgrace, but I still think I made a mistake in showing him my attempts, and that he took me for an impertinent blockhead, and an ambitious pretender."

"Perhaps so," said Consuelo, interrupting his narrative. "At all events, old teachers do not like pupils who seem to learn quicker than they themselves teach. But tell me your name, my lad."

"My name is Joseph."

"Joseph who?"

"Joseph Haydn."

"I will bear your name in mind, that I may see what opinion I must hold of your master's aversion, and of the interest with which your story inspires me, in case one day you should turn out to be somebody. Go on with your narrative, I pray you."

Young Haydn continued as follows; while Consuelo, struck by the similarity of their fortunes, both poor—both destined, as it would seem to be, artists, gazed attentively at the countenance and expression of the chorister. His trivial features and bilious complexion, took, notwithstanding, at times, a singular degree of animation, as he became excited by his narrative. His blue eyes sparkled with a quickness which was at once roguish and good-natured, and everything in his whole manner, both of acting and speaking, announced that he was an extraordinary character.

CHAPTER LXV.

"WHATEVER might be the causes of Master Reuter's dislike to me, he at all events showed it in a very harsh manner, and for a very trifling fault. I had a pair of new scissors, and, like any schoolboy, I turned upon everything that came ready to my hand. One of my comrades had his back turned to me, and his long pigtail was continually sweeping away, as fast as I could write them, the notes which my chalk described on my slate. A quick and fatal idea came into my head; and no sooner came than the deed was done. Crack! the scissors were open—the tail lay on the ground. My master's hawk's eye followed my every motion; and, before my poor companion was aware of his loss, I was reprimanded, noted with a mark of disgrace, and discharged by this summary process.

"I left the cathedral school at seven in the evening, in the month of November of last year, and found myself in the square, with no money, and no other garment than that which I had on my back. I had a moment of despair. I imagined to myself, on being thus expelled with anger and disgrace, that I had committed some enormous fault. I began to cry with all my might over the lock of hair and the end of ribbon which had fallen under my fatal scissors. My comrade, whose head I had thus dishonored, passed me, crying also. Never were more tears shed, or remorse wasted, over a Prussian pigtail.

"That night I passed on the pavement, and as I was sighing the next morning over the necessity and impossibility of getting some breakfast, I was accosted by Keller, the hair-dresser of the school of St. Stephen's. As soon as the witty Keller saw my pitiful face, returning as he was from dressing Master Reuter, who had told him the whole story, he burst into a violent fit of laughter, and loaded me with sarcasms.

"'Hallo!' said he as soon as he saw me, yet afar off,—'so here is

the scourge of wigmakers, the enemy in general, and in particular of all here, who, like me, make it their business to tend and provide for the beauty of the fair. What, ho! my little executioner of pigtails, exterminator of top-knots, come here 'till I cut off all your fine black hair, to replace all the *queues* which are destined to fall before your blows.' I was desperate, furious; I hid my face in my hands, and believing myself to be the object of public vengeance, I was going to take to my heels, when the good Keller caught me by the arm, addressed me kindly, offering to take me home with him, give me the use of a garret in the sixth story, his wife and children occupying the fifth, and to let me live at his table until I should find some employment.

"I went home with the generous Keller, my preserver, my second father; and beside my board and lodging, poor mechanic as he was himself, he found means to advance me a little money in order to continue my studies. I hired an old worm-eaten pianoforte, and snugly stowed in my garret with my Fuchs and my Mattheson, I gave myself up without restraint to my mania for composition. From that time I have regarded myself as favored especially by Providence. The first six sonatas of Emanuel Bach have been my delight during this winter, and I believe that I understand them thoroughly. At the same time, as if to recompense me for my zeal and perseverance, heaven has permitted me to find a little occupation by which to live, and acquit myself of my obligations toward my kind host. I play the organ every Sunday, in the chapel of Count Haugwitz, after playing my part of first violin in the church of the Fathers of Mercy. Moreover, I have obtained two patrons: the one is an abbe, who writes much beautiful Italian poetry, and who is greatly esteemed by her majesty the Queen Empress. His name is Mons. Metastasio, and as he lives in the same house with Keller and myself, I give lessons to a young person who is said to be his niece. My other patron is monseigneur, the ambassador, from Venice."

"Ah! Signor Korner," cried Consuelo, quickly.

"Ah! do you know him?" replied Haydn. "It is Monsieur the Abbe Metastasio, who introduced me to his house. My little talent gave satisfaction there, and his excellency has promised to procure me lessons from Master Porpora, who is now at the baths of Manendorf, with Madame Wilhelmina, the wife or mistress of his excellency. That promise raised me to the seventh heaven. To learn composition, the pure and correct principles of Italian art, to be the pupil of so great a professor, of the first singing master of the universe! I considered my fortune as already made. I blessed my stars, and almost fancied myself already a great master. But, alas! in spite of his excellency's kind intentions, his promise has not proved as easy of realization as I flattered myself; and unless I can find a more powerful recommendation to Porpora, I fear that I shall never be enabled even to approach his person. He is said to be very eccentric; and the more attentive, generous, and kind he shows himself to some of his pupils, the sterner and more capricious he is to others. It seems that Master Reuter is regarded as nobody by Porpora, and I tremble at the mere idea of seeing him. Nevertheless, though he refused the request of the ambassador concerning me point blank, and has declared that he will take no more pupils—as I know that Monseigneur Korner will resist—I still have hopes, and I am resolved to endure the most cruel mortifications patiently, provided that he will teach me something while he scolds me."

"You have formed a wise resolution in that," said Consuelo. "The manners of the great maestro have not been exaggerated to you. But still there is room for you to hope; for if you possess patience, absolute submission, and a true inclination for music, as I think you do, if you do not lose your head in his first outbreaks of temper, and if you succeed in showing him intelligence and rapidity of judgment, at the end of three or four lessons, I promise you that you will find him one of the gentlest and most conscientious of masters. Perhaps even, if your heart answers to your intellect, Porpora will become a solid friend, a just and generous father to you."

"Oh! you overwhelm me with joy. I see clearly that you must know him: you ought also to know his famous pupil, the new Countess of Rudolstadt—La Porporina."

"But what have you ever hear about Porporina, or what do you expect from her?"

"I expect a letter from her to Porpora, and her patronage will be most powerful with him when she comes to Vienna, which she will certainly do after her marriage with the rich Count Rudolstadt."

"When did you hear of this marriage?"

"By the greatest chance in the world. I must tell you that about a month since, Keller lost a friend, who left him some little property at Pilsen, and having neither the time nor the means to make the journey, fearing lest the legacy should not make up for the loss of his business, I offered to go in his place, and have happily succeeded in realizing a small property for him. Returning from Pilsen, I passed last night at a place called Klatau. It was a market day, and the town was full of people. At the same table with me there dined a man whom they addressed as Dr. Wetzeliuss, the greatest glutton, and greatest gossip I ever met. 'Do you know the news?' said he, to one of his neighbors at table. 'Count Albert of Rudolstadt, who is mad, arch-mad, and all but frantic, is going to marry his cousin's music-mistress, an adventuress, a beggar-girl, who is said to have been a low actress in Italy, and who ran away with the old musician Porpora who, becoming disgusted with her, packed her off to be confined at Riesenberga. The event was kept rigidly secret; and as at first they could not understand the nature of the malady or convulsions of mademoiselle, who passed for being very virtuous, I was called in, to attend a case of putrid and malignant fever. But scarcely had I felt the pulse of the patient before Count Albert, who doubtless knew right well the full extent of her virtue, expelled me from the room with violence, and would not suffer me to return. All was arranged quietly. I believe the old canoness performed the office of accoucheur; the poor old lady had never, I fancy, witnessed such a scene before. The child has disappeared, but that which is the most wonderful of all is that the young count who, as you all know, cannot keep the run of time, but takes months for years, has taken it into his head that he is the father of this child, and spoke with such energy and violence to the family, that rather than see him relapse into madness, they have consented to his beautiful marriage.'

"Oh! horror! infamy!" cried Consuelo. "It is one tissue of abominable calumnies, and revolting absurdities."

"Do not suppose that I believed it for one moment," said Joseph Haydn. "The face of that old doctor was so malicious and foolish, that, even before he had been contradicted, I was sure he was uttering only lies and follies. But scarcely had he got through his story, before

five or six young people who were around him took the young lady's part. It was who should praise most highly the beauty, grace, modesty, intellect, and incomparable talents of La Porporina. Every one approved of the match, and praised the old count for consenting to it, while Dr. Wetzeliu8 was treated as a babbler and a fool. It is thus that I learned the truth, and as it is said that Porpora has the greatest regard for a pupil to whom he has given his own name, I took it into my head to go to Riesenber8 to see the future, or the new countess—for some say she is already *secretly* married, to avoid giving offence at court—tell her my history, and procure her interest with her illustrious master."

Consuelo remained pensive for a moment; for his last words concerning the court had struck her; but quickly returning to his affairs, "My boy," said she, "do not go to Riesenber8; Porporina is not there. She is not married to the Count of Rudolstadt, and it is even doubtful whether the marriage ever will take place. It is true, that it has been spoken of, but Porporina, although she has the deepest regard and esteem for Count Albert, did not think that she ought to decide without much consideration, on a matter so serious. She weighed on one side the injury she would do to so illustrious a family, in perhaps depriving it of the favor of the empress, and the consideration of all the nobles of the country; and on the other hand, the evil she would do herself in renouncing the exercise of the noble art which she had studied so passionately and embraced so courageously. Wishing therefore to consult Porpora, and to give the young count time to see whether his passion would stand the test of absence, she suddenly set out for Vienna, alone, on foot, without a guide and almost penniless, but with the hope of restoring repose and reason to him who loves her, and carrying with her, of all the riches which were offered to her, only the witness of her conscience, and the pride of her condition as an artist."

"Oh! she is a true artist, indeed. She must have a strong head, and a noble soul, to have so acted," cried Joseph, fixing his bright eyes on Consuelo; "and, if I do not err, it is she to whom I speak; she before whom I prostrate myself."

"It is she who offers you her hand, and with it her friendship, her counsel, and her aid with Porpora. For we are about to travel together, as I perceive, and if God protect us together, as he has hitherto protected us singly, as he protects all who put their trust in Him, we shall soon be at Vienna, and we will take our lessons of the same master."

"Heaven be praised," cried Haydn, clasping his hands, and weeping for joy, as he raised his arms enthusiastically toward heaven. "I was well convinced, when I looked on you as you slept, that there was something supernatural about you, and that my life and my destiny were in your hands."

CHAPTER LXVI.

WHEN the young people had made a more complete acquaintance, by going over and over again the various details of their situation in

friendly converse, they began to think of the precautions to be taken, and the arrangements made, in order to return to Vienna. The first thing they did was to pull out their purses, and count their money. Consuelo was still the richer of the two; but their funds combined, were at the most sufficient to furnish them the means of travelling leisurely on foot, without suffering hunger, or sleeping in the open air. There was nothing else to be thought of; and Consuelo had already made up her mind to it; but, notwithstanding the philosophic gravity she maintained on that head, Joseph was anxious and pensive.

"What is the matter with you?" said she; "are you afraid of the embarrassment of my company? I would lay a wager that I walk better than you."

"I doubt not," he replied, "that you do everything better than I. But I am fearful and alarmed, when I consider that you are young and handsome, that all eyes will be turned upon you covetously, and that I, frail and delicate, though well resolved to be killed in your defence, should be little able to protect you."

"Of what are you thinking, my poor boy? If I were handsome enough to rivet the eyes of all spectators, do you not know that a woman who respects herself can always command respect by her countenance?"

"Whether you were plain or handsome, young or in the decline of life, impudent or modest, you would not be in safety on these roads, covered with soldiers and vagabonds of all kinds. Since peace has been made, the country is overflowed with soldiery returning to their garrisons, and, more than all, with these volunteer adventurers, who regard themselves as privileged individuals, and knowing no longer whither to look for fortune, apply themselves to pillaging wayfarers laying country places under contribution, and treating provinces like conquered countries. Our poverty protects us from them in that view of the subject, but the very fact that you are a woman, would suffice, at once to awaken their brutality. I think seriously of changing our route, and instead of going by Piseck and Budweiss, which are garrisons offering a continual pretext for the marching and countermarching of desperate soldiers, and others who are but little better, have an idea that we shall do better by descending the course of the Moldau, and following the gorges of the mountains, which are almost uninhabited, and which therefore present nothing to tempt either the cupidity or licentiousness of these gentlemen. We will pass over the river to Reidunan, and there enter Austria at once by way of Friestadt. Once in the territories of the empire, we shall be protected by a police less impotent than that of Bohemia."

"And do you know the road?"

"I do not even know whether there is a road; but I have a little map in my pocket, and I had laid out my plans, when I left Pilsen, to try and return by these mountains, in order to change my road, and see a little more of the country."

"Well, so be it. I think your idea is a good one," said Consuelo, looking at the map which Joseph had just opened. "There are foot-paths everywhere for foot passengers, and cottages where they will receive sober people for a remuneration. I see in fact that there is a chain of mountains which leads us to the source of the Moldau, and thence down the whole length of the river."

"It is the great Böhmer-wald, the highest summits of which are in that region, and form the frontier between Bavaria and Bohemia."

We shall arrive there easily by keeping along the ridges, which will continually show us that the valleys to the right and left descend into one or the other of these two provinces. Since, heaven be praised! I have no more to do with that odious Giants' Castle, I am quite sure that I can guide you aright, and without making you go over more ground than is necessary."

"Let us set forth, then," said Consuelo, "I feel myself perfectly rested. Sleep and your good bread have restored me all my strength, and I can easily go a couple of miles farther to-day. Moreover, I am in haste to remove myself farther from this neighborhood, where I am in constant apprehension of meeting some face that I know."

"Wait a moment," said Joseph. "There is a strange idea that has just come into my head."

"What is it?"

"If you would have no reluctance to dress yourself in boy's clothes, your incognito would be made safe, and you would escape many of the disagreeable remarks that will be made at our halts on the score of you, a young girl, travelling alone in company with a youth."

"The idea is not a bad one; but you forget we are not rich enough to make any purchases. Besides, where should I find clothes to fit me?"

"Listen. I should not have mentioned it, if I had not felt myself able to put it into play. We are precisely of the same height, which does more credit to you, than it does to me; and I have in my wallet a full suit, perfectly new, which will disguise you admirably. This is the history of the suit I speak of. It is a present from my good mother, who, thinking to make me a very useful gift, and wishing to know that I was properly equipped to present myself at the embassy, and to give lessons to young ladies, had a village costume made for me, the most elegant in our part of the world. Doubtless, it is a picturesque garb, and the stuffs are well chosen, as you shall see; but conceive the effect I should have produced at the embassy, and the irrepressible laughter of the niece of the Abbe Metastasio, if I had made my appearance in this rustic cassock, and these loose plaited pantaloons. I thanked my good mother for her gift, and determined to sell it to some peasant who wanted a best suit, or to some strolling actor. It is for this that I brought it with me; but happily I have not been able to dispose of it, for the folk in this country swear it is out of date, and enquire whether it is Polish or Turkish."

"Well, the opportunity has come," said Consuelo, laughing. "Your idea is excellent, and the strolling actress will suit herself to your Turkish dress, the more easily that it is very like a short petticoat. I will buy this, therefore, of you, on credit be it understood; or, rather, I want you to be the keeper of our privy purse, and to let me know the sum of our expenditures when we come to Vienna."

"We shall see about that," said Joseph, putting the purse in his pocket, and promising himself that he would not receive any price.

"It only remains now to see whether it will fit you. I will go and hide myself in the woods, and do you enter into the recesses of these rocks. They will furnish you with a secure and spacious dressing room."

"Go and make your appearance on the stage," said Consuelo, laughing, "I am going behind the scenes."

And withdrawing behind the cover of the rocks, while her companion respectfully withdrew from the vicinity, she proceeded to effect her

transformation. The spring served her for a mirror when she came out from her tiring-room, and it was not without a sense of pleasure that she saw reflected in it, as handsome a little peasant of the Slavonic race, as ever sprung from that wild brood. Her pliant and slender waist was perfectly untrammelled by the loose red woollen girdle; and her leg, free in its play as that of a young fawn, showed itself modestly to a little way above the instep, from the large folds of the pantaloons. Her black hair which she had never condescended to powder, had been cut short during her illness, and curled naturally close round her face. She ran her fingers through it to give it something of the neglected air, which should befit a peasant boy; and wearing her costume with the ease of one used to the stage, she even found means, thanks to her talent for mimicry, to put on an expression full of wild simplicity, and felt, at a glance, that she was so well disguised, that courage and confidence returned to her on the instant. As is often the case with actors, so soon as they have put on their costume, she felt herself in her place, and identified herself with the part she was going to play so completely, that she felt, as it were, some degree of the heedlessness and pleasure of an innocent roving life; some of the gaiety, vigor and freedom of body which belongs to a boy whose school is by the hedge-side.

She had to whistle three times, before Haydn, who, in his fear of shocking her delicacy, had withdrawn a little farther than was necessary, came back to her. When he did so, he uttered a cry of surprise and admiration at seeing her thus, and although he had expected to find her disguised, he could scarcely believe his eyes at the first glance. Her transformation rendered Consuelo even handsomer than before, and at the same time gave her an entirely different aspect in the imagination of the young musician.

The pleasure which the beauty of a woman produces on a very young man, is always in some sort mixed with a sort of fear; and the dress which makes woman, even to the least chary eyes, a veiled and mysterious being, has much to do with that impression. Joseph had a pure and unpolled spirit, and was not only a modest but a timid youth. When first he beheld Consuelo sleeping by the fountain, he had been dazzled by her beauty, motionless as that of a statue, and animated only by the bright sunbeams which poured down upon her. While he conversed with her, he was conscious of emotions unknown before, which he had attributed only to the enthusiasm and joy produced by so happy an encounter. But in the quarter of an hour which elapsed during her mysterious toilet, he had experienced violent palpitations, as the first incomprehensible disturbance returned upon him, so that he had some difficulty in preserving an unchanged aspect and demeanor.

The change of costume which had succeeded so perfectly, that it might have passed for an actual change of sex, suddenly changed all the sensations of the young man, and he no longer felt anything but the impulse of fraternal affection towards this charming and agreeable travelling companion. The same ardent desire to roam and see the country, the same security as to the perils of the road, the same sympathetic gaiety which animated Consuelo at this instant, took possession of him likewise; and they set forth on the journey through the woods and meadows, as light as two birds of passage.

Nevertheless, after a few steps, Joseph remembered that she was a boy, and seeing that she carried her little packet of clothes, aug-

mented by the woman's garb which she had just removed, on the end of a stick across her shoulder, he insisted on relieving her of it. Thereon a contest arose. Consuelo insisted that, with his own knapsack, his violin, and his *Gradus ad Parnassum*, Joseph was sufficiently loaded. Joseph, on the other hand, swore that he would put the whole of Consuelo's parcel into his knapsack, and that she should carry nothing. She was compelled to yield, but in order that she might seem to be carrying something, he consented that she should carry the violin in a sling.

"Do you know," said Consuelo, in order to bring him to yield this point, "that I look as if I were your servant, or at least your guide, for I am a peasant at a glance, while you are a citizen?"

"What sort of citizen?" asked Haydn, laughing; "I have not a bad cut, certainly, for Keller, the barber's boy." And as he spoke, the young man could not help feeling a little annoyance at being unable to show himself to Consuelo in something better than his travel-stained and sun-bleached attire.

"No!" said Consuelo, laughing, "you look more like the prodigal son of some good family returning home with his gardener's boy, the comrade of his frolics."

"By the way, I think we had better hit upon some parts in accordance with our situation," replied Joseph. "We can only pass for what we are—at least for the present—poor travelling artists; and as it is the custom of the profession to dress one's self as he can, according to the means he finds and the money he earns, as we, after the professors in our line, wearing, about the country, the undress of a marquis or of a soldier, so there will be nothing odd in my wearing the seedy black coat of a second-rate professor, or in your adopting the garb of a Hungarian peasant, though it be strange hereabout. We can even say, if questioned about it, that we have recently made a tour in that part of the country, and I can talk to the point about the celebrated village of Rohran which no one ever heard of, and the splendid town of Hamburgh, which no one cares a farthing about. As for you, since your pretty little accent will always betray you, you had better not deny that you are an Italian singer."

"True enough; and we had better have travelling names too—it is usual. I can suit myself with yours, for, according to my Italian habit, I ought to call you Beppo, which is short for Joseph."

"Call me whatever you will; I have the advantage of being as little known under one name as under another. With you it is different. You must have one; which will you choose?"

"The first Venetian abbreviation that comes—Nello—Maso—Rens—Zoto—oh! no, not that," she cried, recollecting herself as she caughtlessly mentioned the childish abbreviation of Anzoletto.

"Why not that?" asked Joseph, struck by her energetic manner.

"Because it will bring me bad luck: they say there are names which do so."

"Well, how shall we baptize you?"

"Bertonl. It is an Italian name at all events, and a sort of diminutive of Albert."

"Il Signor Bertonl! That sounds well," said Joseph, forcing a smile; but this recollection of her noble lover, on Consuelo's part, gave him a pang. He looked back at her walking along secure and at her ease; and, "by-the-by," he said, as he to console himself, "I forgot that it is a boy."

CHAPTER LXVII

THEY soon reached the skirts of the wood and took their course towards the south-east. Consuelo walked bareheaded, and Joseph, though he saw that the sun was scorching her clear fair skin, could not remedy it. His own hat was not new and he could not offer it, and not choosing to display a useless anxiety he would not speak, but taking his hat off suddenly, he put it under his arm.

"That is a queer notion," said she to him. "Do you find the sky cloudy and the plain overshadowed? That makes me remember that my head is bare, and as I have not always possessed all luxuries, I know how to help myself." As she spoke thus, she snatched a branch of wild vine from a neighboring thicket, and rolling it round itself, made herself a sort of green turban.

"Now she looks like a muse," thought Joseph, "and the boy is gone again." But ere long they passed a village in which they found one of those country shops at which you can buy everything, and going into it suddenly before she could anticipate him, he bought one of those straw hats with broad brims turned up at the side, which are worn by the peasants of the valleys of the Danube.

"If you begin plunging into these luxuries," she said, as she tried on her new head-dress, "our bread will give out before we reach our journey's end."

"Your bread give out," cried Joseph, quickly. "I would rather beg of the people in the streets; I would rather turn somersets in the public places—what would I not rather do?—No, you shall want nothing while you are with me." Then seeing that Consuelo was somewhat astonished at this outbreak, he added, trying to fall back upon good-fellowship, "Look you, Signor Bertoni, my prospects depend on you, my fortunes are in your hand, and it is my interest to bring you safely home to Master Porpora."

The idea of her companion falling suddenly in love with her, now came into Consuelo's head. In fact, modest and simple-minded women seldom think of such things until they occur. Besides which, Consuelo was two years older than Haydn, and he was so small and slight that he scarce looked above fifteen, and though she knew him to be past that age, still, as even very young girls are apt to regard men younger than themselves, she looked on Haydn as a mere boy. Nevertheless, she saw that he was unusually affected, and once catching his eyes steadfastly fixed upon her own, she said frankly, "What is the matter with you, friend Beppo? It seems to me that you are full of cares; and I cannot get rid of the idea that my company embarrasses you."

"Say not so," he cried, with evident vexation. "To say so is to show that you have no esteem, no confidence in me, which I would buy at my life's fee."

"If it be so, be not so sad; that is to say, if you have no cause of sadness but those you have named to me."

Joseph fell into a dull silence, and they walked a good way before he had courage to break it; but feeling at length that every moment rendered it more difficult to do so, and fearing that the cause would be suspected, he made a great effort and said, "Do you know what I have been thinking about very seriously?"

"I do not even guess," said Consuelo, who, absorbed in her own thoughts, had not even noticed Joseph's silence.

"I was thinking, that as we journey together, if it would not bore you, you might teach me Italian. I began to read it this winter, but having no one to teach me the pronunciation, I dare not speak a word before you. Nevertheless I understand what I read, and if, as we travel along, you would be so good as to shake off my *mauvaise honte*, and to correct me when I err, I believe my ear is sufficiently musical to catch the accent ere long."

"Oh! with all my heart," said Consuelo, "I delight above all things in allowing no moment of life to pass without learning something; and as we learn in the very act of teaching, it must needs be very good for us both to practice the pronunciation of the language which is par excellence that of music. You fancy that I am an Italian, but I am not, although I speak it with scarcely any accent; but I pronounce it much the most truly when I sing, and whenever I find any difficulty occurring to you, I will sing the words. I am satisfied that we never pronounce ill but because we do not understand well. If the ear clearly detects the exact shade of sound, it is but an effort of memory to repeat it."

"It will then be at once a lesson in Italian and in singing," cried Joseph, "and a lesson, too, which is to last fifty leagues. Ah! by my honor, long life to art, the least dangerous and the least ungrateful of all *amourettes*."

The lesson began at once, and Consuelo, who had at first hard work to avoid bursting out laughing at every word Joseph uttered in Italian, soon began to wonder at the quickness and correctness with which he caught the true sounds. Nevertheless the young musician who was ardently desirous of hearing her singing, had recourse to a little stratagem to make her do so; he pretended to be unable to give the perfect fulness and openness of sound to the Italian *à*, and he sang a phrase of Leo's, in which the word *Felicità* is several times repeated. Then Consuelo without stopping, or losing her breath any more than if she had been sitting at her piano, sang it to him several times. At those full and generous notes, so penetrating, that no others, at that day, could compare with them, the world through, Joseph actually shuddered, as he rubbed his hands together, and uttered a low and passionate exclamation of delight.

"It is your turn to try it now," cried Consuelo, without observing his ecstasies.

Haydn tried the phrase, and executed it so well that his young instructress clapped her hands, crying, good-naturedly, "Wonderfully well done. You learn quickly, and you have a magnificent voice."

"You may say what you will to me on that head," replied Joseph, "but it seems to me that I shall never dare to speak to you of yourself."

"And wherefore so?" said Consuelo. But as she turned towards him she saw that his eyes were full of tears, and that he was clasping his hands together until the bones cracked, as frivolous boys, or very enthusiastic men, will do at times.

"Do not let us sing any more," said she. "Here comes some men on horseback to seek us."

"By no means! Keep silence!" answered Joseph, still half beside himself. "Do not let them hear you, for they will dismount, and worship you if they do."

"I have no great fear of their music-mania—they are butcher boys with calves slung behind them."

The rest of the day passed in alternations of serious studies and lively conversation. Agitated as he was, Joseph was very happy, and was ignorant himself whether he was one of the most trembling worshippers of beauty, or one of the most radiant adorers of art. Consuelo occupied all his thoughts, and transformed his whole existence. Towards evening he perceived that she dragged her steps heavily, and that her pleasure was overpowered by weariness. It is true that for several hours notwithstanding the frequent halts they had made in shady spots by the way-side, she had been almost broken by fatigue, but she cared not for that, and even if it had not been so, she would have desired to obtain distraction from her mental sufferings in quick motion, and even in forced gaiety. The first shades of evening, as they overspread the country with a gloomy hue, brought back the dismal coloring of her soul, which she had so bravely combated. She thought of the sad evening that was about to commence at the Giants' Castle, and of the night, terrible, perhaps, and horrid, which Albert was about to undergo. As the idea struck her, she stopped involuntarily at the foot of a great wooden cross standing on a bare hillock, which indicated the theatre of some traditionary miracle or—crime.

"Alas! you are more weary than you will admit," said Joseph. "But our day's tramp is nearly at an end, for I see the lights of a hamlet glittering from the gorge of that ravine. Perhaps you think I have not the strength to carry you—yet if you would—"

"My dear friend," said she, "you are very proud of your sex, I beg you to have a little more faith in mine, and to believe that I have more strength left to my share, than you to your own. I am a little out of breath with climbing that steep path so much; and if I rest myself, it is only that I want to sing."

"Heaven be praised," cried Joseph. "Sing here then at the foot of the cross, and I will kneel down here. Nevertheless, suppose this should tire you more?"

"It will not be so long," said Consuelo; "but a fancy has taken me to sing a verse of a canticle which my mother used to make me sing with her, night and morning, in the open country, whenever we fell in with a chapel or a cross planted like this at the intersection of four ways."

Consuelo's idea was even more romantic than she was willing to admit. As she thought of Albert, she reflected upon that strange and half supernatural faculty which he had of seeing and hearing things at a distance; she thought that at this very hour he was probably thinking of her, perhaps even saw her; and half dreaming that she could alleviate his sorrows by addressing him in a sympathetic song, sent through distance and darkness, she mounted the pile of stones which formed the abutment of the cross. Then turning toward that part of the horizon behind which lay Riesenbergl, she sung at the full compass of her voice the first stanza of the Spanish canticle

"Consuelo de mi alma," etc.

"My God! My God!" said Haydn to himself, as she finished her song. "I never heard singing before; I knew not what singing is. Can there be other human voices like to this? Shall I ever again hear anything comparable to what you have revealed to

me to-day? Oh! music! holy music! O genius of the art! how thou enflamest, how thou terrifiest me."

Consuelo descended from the stone on which she had stood displaying, like a Madonna, the elegant outline of her figure in profile, relieved against the clear dark blue of the covering sky. In her turn, inspired, after Albert's manner, she fancied she could see him, through woods, across mountains, over valleys, seated upon the Scheckenstein, calm, resigned, and filled with a holy hope. "He has heard me," she thought within herself; "he has recognised my voice and the song which he loves. He has understood me, and will now return to the castle, embrace his father, and perhaps enjoy a quiet night's repose."

"All goes well," she added, speaking to Joseph, but without noticing his gaze of ardent admiration. Then, turning back, she kissed the rough wood of the rustic cross. Perhaps at that moment, by some strange approximation, Albert felt an electrical commotion which unbent the spring of his gloomy will, and sank into the most mysterious depths of his being the delights of a heavenly tranquillity. Perhaps it was at that very moment that he fell into the deep and healthful sleep, in which his father, an uneasy and easily awaked sleeper, found him buried on the following morn at daybreak.

The hamlet, the fires of which they had perceived in the distance, was no more than a great farm, where they were received with hospitality. A family of honest laborers were eating out of doors, on a rough wooden table, at which they made room for them both, without difficulty and without haste. No questions were asked them. In fact they were hardly looked at. The good folk, wearied with a long and hot day's toil, took their meal in silence, absorbed in the enjoyment of a plentiful though simple meal. Consuelo thought her supper delicious; Joseph thought nothing about it, for he was absorbed in admiring Consuelo's pale and noble head, contrasted with the coarse sunburned features of the peasants, gentle and dull as those of the great oxen which fed around them, and which scarce made more noise than they, as they chewed the cud slowly with their ponderous jaws. Each of the company retired silently, so soon as he was satisfied with eating, having made the sign of the cross, and at once went to sleep, leaving the strangers' appetites to prolong at will the pleasures of the table. The women who had waited on these sat down in their places, when they had finished, and applied themselves to supper, with their children. More animated and more curious than the men, they detained and questioned the young travellers. It was Joseph's part to make up their story, but he scarcely departed from the truth, when he told them that he and his companion were two poor strolling musicians. "What a pity that it is not Sunday," said one of the younger girls. "You could have played for us to dance." Then they paid a great deal of attention to Consuelo, whom they examined very closely, thinking her a very pretty boy; while she, to support her character, looked back at them with a confident and steady eye. She had sighed, for one instant, almost in envy of that peaceful patriarchal life, from which her own active and locomotive profession must ever keep her aloof; but when she observed these poor women standing erect behind their husbands, waiting on them respectfully, and then gaily eating their leavings, some nursing their little ones, and others already slaves, through the force of instinct, to their boys, of whom they seemed to think more than of themselves or of their little girls, she

ceased to see any thing in these good cultivators of the earth, beyond mere subjects of necessity and hunger. The males chained down to the soil, valets of their ploughs and their cattle—the females chained down to the master, that is to say, to man, cloistered in the house, servants in perpetuity, and condemned to incessant labor amid the sufferings and toils of maternity—then this apparent serenity appeared to Consuelo only the debasement arising from stupidity, or the torpor arising from hunger, and she said, “Better to be an artist, or a Bohemian wanderer, than either lord or peasant; since to the possession of a rood of ground or of a sheaf of wheat, either the unjust tyranny or the mournful enslavement of avarice attaches,—*viva la liberta!*” she said to Joseph, to whom she expressed her ideas in Italian, while the women were washing and arranging the crockery ware with a great noise, while an old good wife was turning her spinning wheel with the regularity of a machine.

Joseph was surprised to observe that some of the women spoke German passably well; and from them he learned that the head of the family, although he now saw him wearing the dress of a peasant, was of good birth, and had, in his youth, enjoyed both fortune and education; but that having been entirely ruined in the wars of the Succession, he had no other resource than to attach himself as a farmer to a neighboring abbey, which racked him miserably by rights of *mitrage* and other church dues, over and above the usual rent and tithes.

“See, Joseph, did I not tell you truly?” asked Consuelo, “when I told you that we are the only rich in the world, who pay no tax on our voices, and who work only when we will.”

Before bed-time came Consuelo was so tired that she fell asleep on a bench by the side of the door; and Joseph took advantage of the opportunity to ask the farmer’s wife for beds.

“Beds, my lad!” said she, smiling; “if we could give you one, it would be a great deal, and you should be glad to make one do for both of you.”

The reply made the blood mount to Joseph’s face. He looked at Consuelo, but fortunately she had not understood a word that was passing.

“My companion is very tired,” said he, “and if you could give him a little bed, I could sleep cheerfully wherever it might suit, in a stable, or a corner of a hayloft.”

“Well, if the boy is ailing, for humanity’s sake, we will give him a bed in the common chamber; our three daughters shall sleep together; but you must tell your companion to behave himself decently, for my husband and my son-in-law who sleep in the same room, will soon bring him to some reason, if he do not.”

“I will be answerable for the good conduct and civility of my friend; I have only to ascertain whether he would not prefer a bed in the hay, to a room with so many sleepers.”

Joseph had now to awaken the Signor Bertoni, in order to propose this arrangement to him. Consuelo was not so much startled as he had expected. She thought that as the young girls were to sleep in the same room with the father and brother-in-law, she should be safer there than elsewhere; therefore, having wished Joseph good-night, she slipped behind the four brown woollen curtains which enclosed the designated bed, and scarcely taking time to undress, fell sound asleep.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

She was, however, after an hour or two of that heavy sleep, awakened by the continual noise around her; on one side the old grandmother, whose bed almost touched her own, coughed and rattled all night long, with a most dreadful wheezing. On the other side, a young woman was nursing her child, and singing it to sleep; the snoring of the men resembled the roaring of wild beasts; a child, of whom there were four in a bed, was bellowing as he quarreled with his brothers; then all the women got up at once, to make peace, and by their threats and scolding, made more noise than all the rest together. This perpetual bustle, the yelling of the children, the uncleanness, the heavy smell and close atmosphere, charged with foul miasmata, became so disagreeable to Consuelo, that she could hold out no longer. Dressing herself quietly, and taking advantage of a moment when every one appeared to be asleep, she stole out of the house to seek a place where she might sleep quietly till morning.

She felt even that she could sleep more comfortably in the open air. Having passed the preceding night in exercise, she had not been aware of the cold; but now, besides that she was in an exhausted state of body very different from the excitement she had then experienced, the climate of this elevated region was by far severer than that of Riesenbergh. She felt herself shivering, and a great sense of discomfort led her to fear that she should be unable to endure, in succession, many days of toil and nights of watching, since the beginning of them was to be uncomfortable. It was in vain that she reproached herself with having become, as it were, a princess during her stay at the castle; she would almost have given the rest of her days for one hour of refreshing sleep.

Nevertheless, not daring to return into the house at the risk of awakening and disturbing her entertainers, she sought the door of the outhouses, and finding that of the stables open, she groped her way in by the sense of touch. Everything was profoundly silent; and judging therefrom that the place was empty, she stretched herself out in a crib full of straw, the scent and warmth of which were delicious to her.

She had almost fallen asleep, when she felt a warm and damp breath blowing upon her forehead, which ceased with a violent snort, and a half stifled sound of dissatisfaction. Her first alarm passed, she saw in the twilight, which was beginning to dawn, a long face and a pair of formidable horns above her head. It was a fine cow, which having thrust her head over the rack, and snuffed with astonishment, had started back in dismay. Her ear now became speedily accustomed to all the sounds of the stable—the ringing of the chains in their staples, the lowing of the heifers, and the rubbing of their horns against the bars of the cribs. She fell asleep, nor did she wake again until it was broad day, even when the milkmaids entered the stable to drive out the cows, and milk them in the open air. The darkness of the place prevented her discovery, and the sun was up when she opened her eyes. Nestled in the straw, she enjoyed her situation for a few moments longer, but soon found herself so completely rested, that she felt no doubt any more of being able to resume her journey with ease and comfort.

So soon as she jumped now out of her crib, the first object she beheld was Joseph seated opposite to her, on the crib facing that in which she had slept.

"You have made me very uneasy, dear Signor Bertoni," said he, "when the young women told me that you had left their apartment, and that no one knew whither you had gone. I sought for you everywhere, in vain, and it was only in despair of finding you, that I returned hither, where I spent last night, and where to my great surprise I found you. I came out while it was yet dark, and, of course did not think of looking for you here, under the horns of these animals, which might have injured you, nestling in the straw opposite to me. Indeed, signora, you are very rash, and you do not consider the perils of all kinds to which you are exposing yourself."

"What perils, my dear Beppo?" asked Consuelo, extending her hand. "These good cows are gentle beasts, and I frightened them more than they could have injured me."

"But, signora," said Joseph, lowering his voice, "you came here in the middle of the night to seek shelter, wherever you might find it. Other men might have been in this stable beside me—some vagabond less respectful than your faithful and devoted Beppo—some rude serf, perhaps. If, instead of the crib you chose, you had taken the other, and startled not me, but some rustic, or some brutal soldier from his slumbers."

Consuelo blushed as she remembered that she had slept so near to Joseph, alone, and in utter darkness; but her sense of shame only increased her confidence in that good young man.

"Joseph," she said to him, "do you not see that in all my imprudences, heaven is still near to me, and brings me near to you. It is Providence which brought me yesterday to the spring where I found you, where you gave me your bread, your friendship, and your protection. It is Providence, again, which has, this night, placed my careless sleep under safeguard of your paternal care."

Then she related to him with a laugh, the comfortless night which she had spent in the common chamber of the farm, and how tranquilly and happily she had slept among the cows.

"Can it then be true," said Joseph, "that these animals have a more agreeable habitation, and more refined manners than the men who take care of them?"

"It is of that I was thinking when I fell asleep. The animals caused me neither fear nor disgust; and I reproached myself with having contracted notions and habits so aristocratical, that the society of my equals, and the contact of their indigence, had become intolerable to me. Whence comes this, Joseph? He who is born in misery ought not, when he falls back into it, to experience that disdainful repugnance to it to which I have given way; and when the heart has been once vitiated by the atmosphere of wealth, why does it remain habitually delicate, as I have shown, by flying from the nauseating heat, and noisy confusion of this poor covey of human beings?"

"It is, that cleanliness, pure air, and good order within doors are to all choice and fine organizations absolute and legitimate necessities," replied Joseph. "Whoever is born an artist has a taste for whatever is beautiful and good, an antipathy to whatever is coarse and hideous—and misery is both coarse and hideous. I am a peasant, and my parents gave me birth beneath a roof of thatch,—but they were artists; our house, though poor and small, was clean and well ar-

anged. It is true that our poverty was near akin to comfort, and perhaps excessive privation takes away even the perception of better tastes."

"Poor wretches," said Consuelo, "were I rich, I would at once build them a house; and were I a queen, I would abate all the imposts, and put down all these monks and Jews who eat them out."

"If you were rich, you would not think—if you were a queen, you would not choose—to do it. Thus goes the world."

"The world goes ill then."

"Alas! too true! and were it not for the music which transports us into an ideal world, one could but kill himself to think of the horrors which are daily passing in this world."

"To kill himself were easy enough, but whom does it profit, save himself? Joseph, one must become rich, and continue human in order to do good."

"And since that is impossible for all, it were necessary, at least, that all the poor should become artists."

"That is not a bad idea, Joseph. If all the poor had some perception, and some love of art, to lend a coloring to their poverty and to embellish their misery, there would no longer exist uncleanness, or despair, or self forgetfulness; and then the rich would not so despise, and so trample on the poor. Artists are always in some degree respected."

"Ah! you make me think of that, then, for the first time," said Haydn. "Art, then, can have a serious end—can be useful to men?"

"Did you think, then, that it was but an amusement?"

"No—but a disease, a passion, a storm raging at the heart, a fever enkindling itself within us, which we communicate to others. If you know what it is, instruct me."

"I will instruct you, when I know myself; but, doubtless, it is something great—never doubt of that, Joseph. Come, let us set forth, and let us not forget the violin, friend Beppo, your only present property, and the source of your future opulence."

They began by making their little provisions for the breakfast, which they intended to eat on the grass in some romantic spot; but when Joseph pulled out his purse to pay for it, the farmer's wife smiled and refused to receive anything, firmly, though without affectation. In spite of Consuelo's urgency, she would accept nothing, and even watched her young guests, to prevent their slipping any little gift into the hands of the children.

"Recall to your mind," she said at last, and that a little proudly, when Joseph pressed the point, "that my husband is noble by birth; and do not suppose that poverty has so far degraded him, that he is willing to sell hospitality."

"Such pride as that appears to me a little overdone," said Joseph to his fellow-traveller, when they were again afoot. "There is more of pride than of charity in the feeling which animates them."

"I will see nothing in it but charity," replied Consuelo, "and I feel bitterly ashamed, and wholly penitent that I was unable to endure the inconveniences of a house which did not fear the taint and pollution of the vagabond whom I represented. Ah! cursed refinement—absurd delicacy of the spoiled children of the world! thou art but a malady, since thou art but health to the one, in order to be a detriment to another."

"For a good artist as you are, I think you are by far too sensible to things which pass here below," said Joseph. "It seems to me, that an artist should have a certain degree of indifference and forgetfulness as to everything which does not belong to his profession. In the inn, at Klatau, when I heard you and the Giants' Castle spoken of, they said that in the midst of all his eccentricities, Count Albert is a great philosopher. You perceive, signora, that one could not be, at one and the same time, a great artist and a philosopher; that is the reason of your flight. Do not suffer yourself, then, to be moved any farther by the sufferings of mortals, and let us resume our yesterday's lesson."

"I will gladly, Beppo; but know first that philosopher or not, Count Albert is a much greater artist than we."

"Indeed. Then he wants nothing to render him an object of love," said Joseph with a sigh.

"Nothing in my eyes but to be poor, and of humble birth," replied Consuelo, and wrought upon by the attentions Joseph paid her, and excited to enthusiasm by the singular questions he put to her, trembling as he did so, she suffered herself to be led away into the pleasure of conversing something at length about her betrothed. Every reply led to an explanation, and one detail drawing on another, she at length began to relate to him somewhat minutely, all the particulars of the affection with which Albert had inspired her. The name of Anzoletto, however, never once came to her lips, and she perceived with pleasure that it had never once occurred to her to speak of him, in reference to her sojourn in Bohemia.

These revelations, displaced, and rash as they were, brought on the best results. They made Joseph comprehend fully, how deeply the mind of Consuelo was engaged, and the vague hopes which he began almost involuntarily to conceive, vanished like dreams, of which he strove to banish even the memory. After a silence of some duration, which followed their animated conversation, he took a firm resolution to look at her in future neither as a beautiful siren, nor as a dangerous companion, but simply as a great artist and noble woman, whose counsels and friendship must needs exercise a beneficial influence on his life. As much to respond to her confidence, as to put a double barrier on his own resolution, he opened his heart to her likewise, and told her how he, like herself, was engaged, and so to speak betrothed. The romance of his heart was less poetical than that of Consuelo, but to those who know the issue of Haydn's life, it was not less pure and noble. He had exhibited some regard to the daughter of his generous host, Keller the wig-maker, and he, observing their sincere affection, said, "Joseph, I put my trust in you. You seem to love my daughter, and I see that you are not indifferent to her. If you prove as true as you are industrious and grateful, so soon as you shall have ensured yourself a livelihood, you shall be my son-in-law." In a moment of enthusiastic gratitude, Joseph had promised, had sworn, and though he had not the slightest passion for his betrothed, he regarded himself as fettered fast for ever.

He related this tale with deep melancholy, which he could not overcome, as he thought of the difference between his real position, and the intoxicating dreams which he must now renounce for ever. Consuelo supposed that this sadness was a proof of the depth of his passion for Keller's daughter. He dared not undeceive her, and consequently her esteem and perfect reliance on the loyalty and purity

of Beppo, hourly augmented. Their journey was troubled therefore by none of those crises and explosions which might have been pre-
saged as likely to occur during a *tête-à-tête* of a fortnight's duration, surrounded by all circumstances which tend to secure impunity between two young persons, both amiable and intelligent, and filled with mutual sympathy. Although Haydn did not love Keller's daughter, he was content to take his fidelity of conscience for fidelity of the heart, and although he sometimes felt the storm growling at his heart, he was able to master himself so completely, that his fair companion, sleeping in the deep woods or on the heather, which he watched like a dog at her side, traversing deep solitudes in his company afar from the haunts of men, passing many times the night beside him in the same hayloft, or the same cavern, never suspecting the temptations to which he was subjected, or admitted the merits of his victory. When in his old age, Haydn read the first books of Jean-Jacques-Rousseau's confessions, it was with a smile blended with a tear as he recalled to mind his passage across the Böhmer-wald with Consuelo, with trembling love and pious innocence as the companions of their journey.

"Once, indeed, the young artist was in a position of the deadliest danger. When the weather was fine, the roads easy, and the moon brilliant, they adopted the true mode of travelling on foot without running the risk of bad lodgings. They took up their abode for the day in some pleasant shady place, where they chatted, dined, practised music, slept, and when the evening began to grow cold, packed up their luggage and walked on again until day-light. Thus they avoided the fatigue of walking in the full heat of the sun, the danger of being curiously scrutinized, and the uncleanness and expense of hotels.

But when the rain, which became very frequent in the higher portions of the Böhmer-wald near the sources of the Moldau, forced them to take shelter, they did so, as they could, sometimes in the hut of some serf, sometimes in the granaries of some castle-ward. They always carefully avoided wayside-inns, where they might much more easily have obtained lodgings, but where they were sure to fall among rude, perhaps insulting company, and scenes of outrage.

One night during a violent tempest they entered a goat-herd's hut, who, as his only welcome, exclaimed, as he yawned and stretched his arm towards his sheepfold, "Go into the hay."

Consuelo stole away as was her custom to ensconce herself in the darkest corner, and Joseph made his way toward another, when he stumbled over the legs of a man who was asleep, and who swore horribly, though but half awakened. Other imprecations replied to his oaths, and Joseph, frightened at the company, drew near to Consuelo, and caught her by the arm to make sure that no one should interpose between them. His first idea was to depart, but the rain fell in torrents on the plank roof of the hut, and every one was fast asleep. "Let us stay," whispered Joseph "until the rain ceases. You may sleep without fear for I shall not close an eye, and shall remain beside you; no one can suspect that there is a woman here. When the weather becomes tolerable I will waken you and we will slip out of doors." Consuelo hesitated; but there was more danger in going than in remaining. Should the goat-herd and his guests remark her apprehension of them, they would undoubtedly suspect something either that her sex or her possession of money rendered

her fearful; and if these men were capable of ill intentions, they could easily follow them into the country and attack them there. Consuelo having reflected on all this, remained quiet, but she wound her arm into that of Joseph, through a very natural sensation of alarm, and of confidence in his vigilant protection.

When the rain ceased, as neither one nor the other had slept, they were on the point of going forth, when they heard their unknown companions rising, and talking one with another in some incomprehensible slang, as they lifted their heavy packets, and loaded them on their shoulders. They then withdrew after exchanging a few words in German with the goat-herd, which led Joseph to think that they were smugglers, and that their host was in their confidence. It was barely midnight, but the moon was rising, and by a gleam which fell on them obliquely through the half-open door, Consuelo saw the flash of their arms, which they were endeavoring to conceal under their cloaks. At the same time she was satisfied that no one remained in the hut, for the goat-herd himself went out with the contrabandists, whom he promised to guide through the mountain passes, leaving her alone with Haydn. She heard him tell them, that he could lead them to the frontiers by a route known to himself only; and one of those stern resolute-faced men replied—"If you deceive us, I will blow your brains out on the first suspicion." Their measured tramp re-echoed on the gravel for some minutes. The sound of a neighboring brook, however, swollen by the rains, covered that of their march which was soon lost in the distance.

"We had no occasion to fear them," said Joseph; "they are persons who avoid the eyes of men, even more than we do."

"And for that very reason," said Consuelo, "I think that we were in danger. When you stumbled over them in the dark, you did well in making no reply to their oaths. They took you for one of themselves, otherwise they would have feared us as spies, and we should have been in an awkward position. Thank God, however, we have no more to fear, and we are once again alone."

"Go to sleep, then," said Joseph, as Consuelo withdrew her arm from his own. "I will keep watch still, and at daybreak we will set forth."

Consuelo had been oppressed more by fear than by fatigue, and she was so much in the habit of sleeping by the side of her friend, that she yielded to her weariness, and slumbered almost instantly. But Joseph, who had also fallen into the custom of sleeping tranquilly and almost unconsciously at her side, on this occasion, could not rest. Everything disturbed him—the melancholy sound of the streamlet, the wind complaining through the fir trees, the moonbeams falling through a chink in the roof, and faintly illuminating the pale face of Consuelo, set off by her jet black hair; and, lastly, I know not what of the wild and savage, which seems to exist in the heart of every man, and to be awakened in him, when all around is wild and savage. At length day broke, and as he could now distinctly see the pure grave features of Consuelo, he was ashamed at his own thoughts and sufferings. He went out and bathed his head and hair in the ice-cold waters of the stream, and that done, felt as if he had washed away the guilty thoughts which had inflamed his brain.

Consuelo soon joined him, and performed the same ablutions to arouse herself from the exhaustion which succeeds a deep sleep, and to familiarize herself at a single motion with the chill atmosphere of

the early morning. She was astonished to see Haydn look so overcome and so sad.

"Oh! now indeed, Brother Beppo," she said to him, "you do not bear fatigue and emotion so well as I do. You are as pale as these little flowers, which look as if they were weeping into the face of the stream."

"And you," said Haydn, "are as fresh as these beautiful wild roses, which look as though they smiled upon its banks. I know, however, that I can defy fatigue in spite of my pallid face; but as to emotion signora, it is true that I know not how to endure it."

He was sad all the morning; and, when they stopped to eat their bread and hazel nuts on a beautiful sloping meadow under the shelter of a wild vine, she pressed him with so many artless questions on the causes of his gloomy mood, that he could not refrain from answering her with words full of despite against himself and his destinies.

"Well, if you must know," said he, "learn that I am unhappy, because I am drawing daily nearer to Vienna, where my destiny is engaged, although my heart is not. I do not love my betrothed, and yet I will keep my promise, for I have promised."

"Is it possible?" cried Consuelo, struck with surprise. "In that case, my poor Beppo, our fortunes, which I thought so much alike in many points, are utterly dissimilar, for you are hastening toward a bride whom you do not love, and I am flying from a lover whom I do love. Strange fortune, which gives to these that which they dread, and snatches from those that which they adore."

She pressed his hand affectionately as she spoke, and Joseph saw clearly that her reply was not dictated by the suspicion of his temerity, or the desire of reading him a lesson; but the lesson was none the less efficacious. She pitied his misfortune, and mourned over it with him, even while she showed him, by the deep and sincere utterance of her own heart, that she loved another immutably, and with all her heart.

That was Joseph's last folly towards her. He snatched his violin, and, as he scraped it violently, forgot the storms of the past night. When they set forth again upon their road, he had completely abjured his love as a thing impossible, and the events which followed, but caused him to feel the more strongly the potency of friendship and devotion. When Consuelo saw a dark shadow fall upon his brow, and when she endeavored by gentle words to assuage his sorrow—"Do not disturb yourself on my account," he said. "If I am condemned not to love my wife, at least, I shall feel sincere friendship for her, and friendship will make up for the want of love. I feel it better than you would believe."

CHAPTER LXIX.

HAYDN had never cause to regret that journey, or the sufferings which he had combated. For he received better lessons in Italian, and gained more correct ideas of music, than ever he had conceived before. During the long halts which they made in the shades of the Böhmerwald, our young artists revealed one to the other all they

possessed of intelligence and genius. Although Joseph Haydn had a fine voice, and could hold his own as a chorus singer, and although he played well on the violin and on other instruments, he readily understood when he heard Consuelo sing, that she was infinitely superior to him as a virtuoso, and that she could have made him an able singer, even without the aid of Master Porpora. But Haydn's ambition and his faculties were not to be limited to this branch of art; and Consuelo, seeing that he was so little advanced in the practice, while on the theory of the art, he expressed opinions so elevated and so well understood, said to him one day,—“I am not sure that I am doing well in giving you an attachment for the study of singing, for if you should take a passion for the profession, you will be, perhaps, sacrificing higher powers which lie dormant within you. Let me see some of your compositions. In spite of my long and severe studies of counterpoint with so great a master as Porpora, all that I have learned barely enables me to comprehend the creations of genius, and I have not the time, even if I had the courage, to attempt myself to create works *in extenso*; whereas, if you possess the creative genius, you ought to follow that line, and to regard song and the use of instruments only as the means to an end.”

It is true that since Haydn's meeting with Consuelo, he had thought only of getting her to teach him to sing. To follow her, or to live with her—to find her at all points throughout his career, was for many days his dearest and most cherished dream. He made, therefore, some difficulties about showing her his last manuscript, which he had finished writing on his way to Pilsen. He feared equally that she should find him inferior in that line, and that she should think his talent so distinguished as to oppose his desire to sing. But he yielded at last, and partly by consent—partly by violence, suffered her to snatch the mysterious copy from him. It was a little sonata for the piano, which he intended for his young pupils. Consuelo began by reading it with the eye, and Joseph was astonished to see that, by simply reading it, she mastered it as completely as if she had heard it executed. Then she made him play several passages of it on the violin, and sang herself such as were possible for the human voice. I know not whether from that first scintillation Consuelo divined the future author of *the Creation*, and so many other admirable productions, but it is very certain that she foresaw a great master, and she said as she returned his manuscript to him, “Courage, Beppo, you are a distinguished artist, and will be a great composer, if you work hard. You have ideas—that is certain. With ideas and science much may be accomplished. Acquire science, then, and let us triumph over the eccentric humors of Master Porpora. He is the master you require. But think no more of the boards. Your place is elsewhere, and your plume must be your baton of command. You are not destined to obey, but to govern. When one might be the soul of the work, how should he think of being the mere machine? Come, maestro that shall be, study no more quavers and cadences with your throat. Learn where you must place them, and not how to execute them; that is the business of your very humble servant and subordinate, who undertakes the first female that you write for a mezzo-soprano.”

“O, Consuelo *de mi alma*!” said Joseph, transported with joy and hope. “What! I write for you? I be understood and expressed by you! What glory, what ambition, you suggest to me!—but no, no! It is a dream—a madness. Teach me to sing. I prefer rendering, as

according to your heart and your intelligence, the ideas of others, to composing for your divine lips accents unworthy of you."

"Come, come," said Consuelo, "a truce to ceremony. Try to improvise something now with the violin—now with the voice. It is thus that the soul manifests itself on the extremity of the lips, at the tips of the fingers. So shall I know whether you have, indeed, the divine *afflatus*, or are but a quick scholar steeped in recollections of the works of others."

Haydn obeyed her; and she was pleased to see that he was not scientific, and that he had youth, freshness and simplicity in his first ideas. She encouraged him more and more, and, from that time forth, would only teach him to sing in so far, as she said, as to teach him how to introduce it.

They amuse themselves afterwards in singing little Italian duets together, which she taught him, and which he learned by heart. "Should we come to want money on our journey," said she, "we shall have to depend on street singing; and, perhaps, the police may take it into their heads to put our musical powers to the test—if by chance they should take us for vagabond cut-purses, so many of whom there are, vile wretches, who dishonor our profession. Let us be ready, at all events. My voice, using it entirely as a contralto, may pass for that of a young boy, before the change has taken place. You must also learn to play a few little songs on the violin, in which you can accompany me. You will soon see whether it is a bad study. These popular facetiæ are full of energy and of original sentiment, and as to my old Spanish songs, they are perfect gems, diamonds unpolished. Master, make your account of them. Ideas will engender ideas."

These studies to Haydn were sources of perfect pleasure. It was from them, perchance, that he struck the vein of those pretty, fairy-like, childish compositions, which he threw off at a later day, for the puppet-shows of the little Princess Esterhazy. Consuelo gave so much gaiety, so much grace, animation and spirit into these lessons, that the good young man, carried back to the petulance and careless happiness of childhood, forgot his ideas of love, his privations, his uneasinesses, and had now no other wish than that this wandering education might never have an end.

It is not our intention to write a guide-book of the travels of Consuelo and Haydn; but slenderly acquainted with the bye-paths of the Böhmer-wald, we shall, perhaps, err widely in our descriptions, were we to follow their track by the confused recollections which alone remain to us. Suffice it to say, that the first half of their journey was agreeable, rather than the reverse, up to the moment when an adventure befell them, which must not be passed over.

They had followed from its source downward, the northern bank of the Moldau, because it appeared to them the least frequented and the most picturesque. They descended then during one whole day, the deeply embanked gorge, which extends itself, descending all the way, in the direction of the Danube. But when they had come so far as Schenau, seeing the chain of mountains descending toward the plain, they regretted that they had not chosen the other bank of the river, and with it the other branch of the chain, which ran off, rising continually, towards Bavaria. These mountains offered them more woodland retreats, and more poetical haunts than the valleys of Bohemia. During their mid-day halts in the depths of the forest,

they amused themselves with setting springs and bird-lime for the little birds, and on awakening from their siesta, often found their snares well-furnished with this small game, which they cooked with a fire of dead wood in the open air, and thought delicious. To the nightingales, however, they gave their lives, under the pretext that these musical birds were their brother artists.

Our hapless couple, therefore, now wended their way wearily along, seeking a ford but finding none; for the river was rapid, deeply embanked, and swollen by the rains of the last days. At length they came to a sort of dock, to which was moored a small boat, with a boy for boat-keeper. They hesitated a little, on seeing a number of persons approaching the boy before them, and bargaining for a passage. These men separated, after taking leave of one another. Three preferred to follow the northern bank to Moldau, while the two others entered the boat. This circumstance decided Consuelo—"a meeting on the right, a meeting on the left," said she to Joseph. "We may as well cross over, since that was our first intention."

Haydn still hesitated, and insisted that the men were ill-looking, talked loud, and had brutal manners; when one of them, as if to contradict this unfavorable opinion, bade the ferryman stop, and addressing Consuelo in German, and beckoning with an air of jolly good nature, cried—"Come, my lad, come on; the boat is not loaded, and you can go across with us if you desire it."

"We are much obliged to you, monsieur," replied Haydn, "and will profit by your kindness."

"Come, my lads," resumed he, who had spoken before, and whom his companion called M. Mayer; "come, jump in."

Joseph had scarcely taken his seat in the boat, before he observed that the two strangers were looking alternately at himself and Consuelo, with great attention and curiosity. Nevertheless, the face of M. Mayer announced only mildness and gaiety. His voice was agreeable, his manners polite, and Consuelo gained confidence from his gray hair and paternal expression.

"You are a musician, my lad, are you not?" said he to the latter.

"At your service, monsieur," replied Joseph.

"And you, too?" asked M. Mayer of Joseph. "He is your brother, I presume," he added.

"No, monsieur, he is my friend," said Joseph. "We are not even of the same nation; and he hardly speaks German at all."

"What country does he come from, then?" asked M. Mayer, still gazing at Consuelo.

"From Italy, monsieur," replied Haydn.

"Venetian, Genoese, Roman, Neapolitan, or Calabrian?" said M. Mayer, pronouncing each of these words with perfect ease, in its own peculiar dialect.

"Oh! monsieur, I see that you can talk with every kind of Italian," said Consuelo, fearing to make herself remarkable by too obstinate a silence. "I am from Venice."

"Ah! a beautiful country, that," said M. Mayer, immediately adopting Consuelo's dialect. "Have you long left it?"

"Only six months."

"And you are strolling the country, playing the violin, hey?"

"No. It is he who accompanies," said Consuelo, pointing to Joseph. "I sing."

"And do you play no instrument—hautboy, flute, or tambourine?"

"No. It were useless to me."

"But if you are a good musician, you could easily learn."

"Oh! certainly, if it were necessary."

"But you do not care about it, hey?"

"No. I prefer to sing."

"And you are right. But you will have to come to that, or change your profession, and that before very long."

"And wherefore so, monsieur?"

"Because your voice will very soon break, if it has not begun to do so already. How old are you? Fourteen, or fifteen at the utmost?"

"Somewhere thereabout."

"Exactly so. Then within a year you will sing just like a little frog, and it is by no means certain that you will ever become a nightingale again. It is a sharp trial which every boy has to undergo, when he passes from childhood to youth. Sometimes he loses his voice altogether, when he gains his beard. Were I you, I would learn to play the fife; so you would always be able to gain your livelihood."

"I will see about it, when the time comes."

"And you, my fine fellow," said M. Mayer, speaking to Joseph in German, "do you play the violin, only?"

"Pardon me, monsieur," answered Joseph, gaining confidence, as he saw that Consuelo was in no wise put out by the good M. Mayer's questions,—“I play a little on several other instruments."

"Such as, for instance?"

"The piano, the harp, the flute; a little on almost anything, when I have a chance to learn."

"With such talents, you do very wrongly to tramp the roads as you are doing; it is a rough trade. I see that your companion, who is still younger and more delicate than you, is almost beaten now; for he halts in his gait."

"Have you observed that, monsieur?" said Joseph, who had marked it but too clearly himself, although his companion would not confess the swelling and soreness of her feet.

"I saw very plainly," said M. Mayer, "that it was with great pain he dragged himself down to the boat."

"Ah! monsieur," said Haydn, concealing his annoyance under an air of philosophical indifference; "what would you have? We are not born to live together at our ease; and when it is necessary for us to suffer, why, we suffer."

"But when one might live more happily and more respectably by adopting a permanent dwelling—what say you, then? I do not like to see intelligent and amiable children as you appear to be, wandering about like vagabonds.—Take the opinion of an old man who has children of his own, and who, in all probability, will never see you again, my young friends. By running after adventures in this way, you will only corrupt, if you do not kill yourselves. Remember what I say to you."

"Thanks for your good counsel, monsieur," said Consuelo, with an affectionate smile; "we will, perhaps, take advantage of it."

"May heaven listen to you, my little gondolier," said M. Mayer to Consuelo, who had taken up an oar mechanically, and began to row according to a popular habit, especially current in Venice.

The boat touched the bank at last, after having made a long slant down stream, in consequence of the strength of the current which was both swift and swollen. M. Mayer took friendly leave of the

young artists, as he wished them good-bye, and his silent comrade would not allow them to pay the ferryman. After suitable adieux, Consuelo and Joseph entered a path which led towards the mountains, while the two strangers followed the west bank of the river, in the same direction.

"That M. Mayer seems to me a very worthy man," said Consuelo, turning round for the last time on the brow of the hill, before losing sight of him. "I am sure that he is a good father of his family."

"He is inquisitive and talkative," said Joseph; "and I am very glad that you are at liberty from the embarrassment of his questions."

"He loves to talk, as many men do, who have travelled much. He is a citizen of the world, to judge by his facility in pronouncing different languages. What country can he come from?"

"His accent is Saxon, though he speaks the language of Lower Austria well. I think he is from the north of Germany; perhaps a Prussian."

"So much the worse. I don't like the Prussians, and their king Frederick, the least of all his nation, after all that I heard of him at the Giants' castle."

"If that is the case, you will be a favorite in Vienna, for that warlike and philosophic king has no partisans, either in the court or in the city."

As they conversed thus, they entered the depths of the forest, and followed paths which, at one time, wandered devious among the dark pines, and at another, coasted the slopes of the broken mountains. Consuelo thought these Hyrcinio-Carpathian mountains more agreeable than sublime; for after having crossed the Alps several times, she did not feel the same delight with Joseph, who had never seen hills so majestic as these. His impressions, therefore, amounted almost to enthusiasm, while his companion felt more disposed to reverie. Consuelo, moreover, was very weary this day, and made great efforts to conceal it, in order to avoid afflicting Joseph.

They slept for a few hours, during the heat of the day, and after having dined, and practised their music, set off again toward sunset. But, ere long Consuelo, though she had bathed her delicate feet for a long time in the crystal water of the mountain springs, felt acutely the laceration of her feet on the pebbles, and was compelled to admit that she could not make good their night's march. Unfortunately the country on that side was absolutely a desert. There was not a cottage, not a monastery, not even a cowherd's hut on the declivity toward the Moldau. Joseph was in despair, the night was too cold to think of passing it in the open air; but at length, through an opening between two hills, they discovered lights at the foot of the opposite slope. This valley, into which they were descending was Bavaria, but the town which they saw was farther off than they had imagined; and it seemed to Joseph that it continually receded, as they advanced toward it. To put the last stroke to their troubles, a fine cold rain began to fall, and in a few minutes so obscured the atmosphere that the lights disappeared; so that when, with much pain and peril, they had reached the base of the mountain, they knew not in what direction to proceed; they were now, however, on a level road, and they continued to drag themselves along it constantly descending, when they heard the sound of a carriage coming toward them. Joseph did not hesitate to hail it, in order to obtain some directions as to the road, and the possibility of obtaining a lodging for the night.

"Who goes there?" cried a powerful voice, and the click of a pistol lock was heard at the same moment. "Stand off, or I will blow your brains out."

"We are not very formidable," replied Joseph, in no wise disconcerted. "See, we are but two boys, and all that we ask is instructions concerning the road."

"What is this?" exclaimed another voice, which Consuelo instantly recollected as being that of the good-natured M. Mayer. "These are my little acquaintances of this morning. I recognise the accent of the elder. Are you there too, my little gondolier?" he added in Venetian, addressing himself to Consuelo.

"I am here," she replied in the same dialect, "We have lost our way, and we are asking you, my good sir, where we can find any place of refuge, from a palace down to a stable. Tell us, I beseech you, if you know."

"Ah! my poor children," replied M. Mayer, "you are at least two miles distant from any sort of habitation. You will not find so much as a kennel even on these mountains. But I have pity on you. Get into my carriage; I can give you two seats without crowding myself. Come, do not make a fuss about it, but get in."

"Monsieur, you are much too good," cried Consuelo, touched by his hospitality; "but you are going to the north, and we are journeying toward Austria."

"No. I am going to the westward; in an hour, at the farthest, I will set you down at Biberach, and to-morrow you will enter Austria. This will even shorten your road. Come, make up your minds, unless you like standing there in the rain, and delaying us all."

"Well—courage and confidence," whispered Consuelo to Joseph, and they entered the carriage, in which they observed that there were three persons. Two of them sat on the front seat, one of whom was driving. The third, who sat on the back seat, was M. Mayer. Consuelo took the opposite corner, and Joseph sat between them. The carriage was a strong roomy wagon with six seats, and the tall powerful horse, under the guidance of a vigorous hand, broke into a trot, and made the rings on his collar jingle merrily, as he shook his head with impatience.

CHAPTER LXX.

"As I was telling you," said M. Mayer, resuming his discourse where he had stopped in the morning, "there can be no harder and more laborious trade, than that which you have adopted. When the sun shines, all indeed looks brightly; but the sun does not shine always, and your fate is as variable as the atmosphere."

"Whose destiny is not variable and uncertain?" said Consuelo. "When the skies are inclement, Providence sends us good hearts, who succor us on the road; it is not, therefore, in moments such as these, that we should declaim against it."

"You have quick wits, my little friend," said M. Mayer; "you come from that beautiful land, where every one is quick-witted. But believe me, neither your wits nor your fine voice will prevent your dying

of hunger in these dismal Austrian provinces. Were I in your place I would go and seek my fortunes in some rich and civilized country under the protection of a great prince."

"What prince do you mean?" asked Consuelo, who was not a little surprised at this insinuation.

"Oh! on my honor I do not know what prince; there are plenty of them."

"But is not the Queen of Hungary a great princess?" asked Haydn. "Is not one protected in her states?"

"Oh! certainly," replied Mayer; "but you do not seem to know that Maria Theresa detests music, and vagabonds yet more; and that you will certainly be driven out of Vienna, if you make your appearance in the streets in the guise of troubadours as you are now."

At that moment Consuelo again caught a glimpse, against a dark back-ground, far below the road, of the lights she had seen before, and pointed them out to Joseph, who immediately signified to M. Mayer his desire to leave the carriage, in order to obtain a night's lodging nearer than Biberach.

"Those!" exclaimed M. Mayer, "you take those for lights, hey? They are lights, in truth; but they are lights, which will guide you into no better lodgings than dangerous swamps, in which many a traveller has been swallowed up. Have you never seen a Will-o'-the-Wisp?"

"Often on the lagoons of Venice," replied Consuelo, "and on the small lakes in Bohemia."

"Well, my children, those lights are neither more nor less than that."

And thereupon, M. Mayer continued for a long time insisting upon it to our young friends, that they ought to establish themselves; and descanting on the difficulties they would have to encounter in Vienna, but still without recommending any particular place to them. Joseph was much struck at first by his obstinacy, and was inclined to fear that he had discovered Consuelo's sex; but the good faith with which he seemed to address her as a boy—going so far as to advise her rather to adopt the military life, as soon as she should be of age to do so, than to go tramping about the country—reassured him on this point; and he convinced himself at last that M. Mayer was one of those weak-headed men, who continue repeating all day long the first notion that has come into their head on awaking. Consuelo, on the other hand, took him for a schoolmaster or a Protestant minister, whose whole mind was fixed on education, morals, and proselytizing.

At the end of an hour they arrived at Biberach, when the night had become so dark, that they could literally distinguish nothing. The carriage stopped in the court-yard of an inn, where he was instantly accosted by two men, who took him aside to speak with him. When they came into the kitchen, where Consuelo and Joseph were warming themselves and drying their clothes by the fire, Joseph recognised in those two persons the men who had parted from M. Mayer at the ferry of the Moldau, where he had crossed over, leaving them on the left bank. One of the two was one-eyed, and the other, although he had both his eyes, was hardly the better looking. He who had crossed the water with M. Mayer, and whom our travellers found in the carriage, soon came to join them, but the fourth man did not make his appearance. They all talked together in a language that was incomprehensible even to Consuelo, who understood no

many tongues, M. Mayer appearing to exercise some sort of authority over them, or at least to influence all their decisions; for after a very animated though whispered conversation they retired, with the exception of him whom Consuelo styled, in her conversation with Joseph, the silent man. He it was who never left M. Mayer.

Joseph was just making preparations to have a frugal meal served for himself and Consuelo on the end of the kitchen table, when M. Mayer entered the room, and invited them to sup with him, insisted on it so good-humoredly, that they did not dare to refuse. He led them at once into the dining-room, where they found an absolute feast, or what appeared a feast to them who had not enjoyed anything like a comfortable meal, during five days spent in a long and toilsome journey.

Consuelo, however, was exceeding moderate in her enjoyment of the good things set before them. For the good cheer which M. Mayer made, the attention of the servants who waited on him, and the quantity of wine which he drank, as did his silent comrade also, compelled her to abate not a little of the high opinion she had formed of the puritanical virtues of their entertainers. She was shocked at the eagerness he showed to make her and Joseph drink beyond what they desired, and at the vulgar jollity with which he prevented them from mixing their wine with water. She also observed, much to her annoyance, that, whether from absence of mind, or from an absolute necessity of repairing his strength, Joseph was giving way to his humor, and was becoming much more animated and communicative than he desired. At last she became almost angry, when she found that he was insensible to the jogs which she gave him with her elbow in order to arrest the frequency of his libations, and withdrawing his glass at the moment, when M. Mayer was about to fill it again—"No, Monseieur," she said, "pardon us that we do not follow your example. It does not suit us."

"You are queer musicians," said Mayer, laughing frankly and carelessly; "musicians who do not drink. Well, you are the first of that kind I have ever met."

"And you, monsieur, are not you too a musician?" asked Joseph. "I would lay a wager that you are. The deuce take me, if you are not a chapel master in some Saxon Principality."

"Perhaps I am," replied Mayer, smiling, "and it is on that account that you inspire me with sympathy, my children."

"If monsieur is a master," said Consuelo, "there is too much difference between his talents and those of poor street singers, such as we."

"There are poor street singers, who have more talents than people give them credit for; and there are great masters, ay! chapel masters to the greatest sovereigns in the world, who began their career by being street singers.—What if I were to tell you that I heard this morning, on the left bank of the Moldau, two charming voices issuing from a nook of the mountain, as they sang a pretty Italian duet, accompanied by very agreeable, not to say scientific, ritornellas on the violin! Well, that very thing happened to me, as I was breakfasting with my friends on the hill side; and yet, when I saw the musicians who had delighted me so much, coming down the hill, I was much astonished to see only two poor children, the one clad like a little shepherd, the other, very genteel, very artless, and yet, apparently, very little favored by fortune. Be not, therefore, either ashamed or

surprised at the friendship which I show you, my young friends; but do me the favor to drink with me to the muses, who are our common patronesses."

"Monsieur Maestro!" exclaimed Joseph, now completely won over and in the highest spirits, "I will drink to your health. Oh! you are a true musician, I am certain of it, since you are so enthusiastic about the talents of—of Signor Bertoni, my companion."

"No, you shall drink no more," cried Consuelo, impatiently snatching his glass away from him, "nor will I either. We have only our voices by which to live, Monsieur Professor, and wine spoils the voice you ought, therefore, to encourage us to remain sober, instead of endeavoring to debauch us."

"Well, you speak reasonably," said Mayer, as he replaced the water decanter, which he had set behind him, on the middle of the table. "Yes; take care of your voices by all means. That is well said. You are more prudent than your age promises for you, friend Bertoni; and I am glad we have seen your conduct so far tested. You will succeed—I am sure of it—as much from your prudence as from your talent. You will succeed, and I shall be happy to contribute to your success."

And, thereupon, the pretended professor, taking things quite at his ease, and speaking with an air of extreme kindness and frankness, offered to take them with him to Dresden, where he offered to procure them lessons from the celebrated Hasse, and the special protection of the Queen of Poland, who was princess electoral of Saxony. That princess, who was the wife of Augustus III. King of Poland, was herself a pupil of Porpora. Between the master and the *Sassone*,* there was a rivalry for the favors of that princess, who had herself been their first cause of enmity. Even if Consuelo had felt disposed, therefore, to seek her fortunes in the north of Germany, she would not have chosen that court wherein to make her first appearance, since she well knew that she should there find herself in a contest with the school and clique which had triumphed over her master. She had so often heard him speak of them during his hours of wrath and bitterness, that, in any circumstances, she would have felt no disposition to follow the counsels of Professor Mayer.

As to Joseph, however, his position was widely different. Having become heated with wine during supper, he fancied that he had found a powerful protector, and promoter of his future fortunes. The thought of abandoning Consuelo had not indeed entered his head, but being slightly intoxicated he gave himself up to the hope of meeting him again at some future day. He put full confidence in his good will, and thanked him very warmly. In the enthusiasm of the moment, he even took up his violin and began to play it, entirely out of tune—M. Mayer applauding him all the time, either because he did not like to offend him by observing his false notes, or, as Consuelo thought because, being himself a very bad musician, he did not perceive it. The error in which he continued concerning her own sex, although he had heard her sing, had proved to her satisfactorily that he could be no practised musician, since he had suffered himself to be deceived, so that no village serpent-player or trumpet major could have been imposed upon more thoroughly. Still M. Mayer insisted that they should suffer him to carry them on to Dresden; and

* This was a surname given by the Italians to John Adolphus Hasse who was a Saxon by birth.

although he still refused, Joseph listened to his offers as if he was dazzled by them, and made such promises of going thither at the shortest possible notice, that Consuelo felt herself compelled to undeceive M. Mayer as to the possibility of such an arrangement. "You must not think of anything of the sort at present," said she, in a very firm tone, "Joseph; for you are perfectly aware that it cannot be, since you have yourself very different prospects." Mayer renewed his attractive offers, and seemed much surprised at her refusing them as did Joseph also, who seemed to recover his reason so soon as the Signor Bertoni took up the word.

While this was going on, the silent traveller—who had appeared but for a short time during supper—came to call M. Mayer, who left the room in his company. Consuelo took advantage of the interruption to scold Joseph for the readiness with which he listened to the fine words of the first comer, and to inspiration of strong wine.

"Have I said anything which I should not have said?" asked Joseph, who was now alarmed at his own imprudence.

"No," she replied; "but it is sufficiently imprudent in itself to have kept company for so long a time with strangers. The longer they look at me, the more chance there is of their beginning to suspect that I am not a boy. It is all to no purpose that I strive to blacken my hands with chalk, and that I keep them under the table as much as I can; for they must have remarked their weakness and delicacy, if luckily they had not both been engaged—the one with the bottle, and the other with the sound of his own voice. Now the most prudent thing for us to do, is to take ourselves hence, and go sleep in some other inn; for I am by no means easy with these new acquaintances, who seem determined to attach themselves to our steps."

"What?" cried Joseph, "run off disgracefully like ungrateful wretches, without saying adieu, or thanking this great man, this illustrious professor? Who knows if it may not be the great Hasse, with whom we have been supping?"

"Believe me, I can assure you that it is not—and if you had your wits about you, you would have remarked a quantity of wretched commonplaces which he has uttered about music. So do not masters talk. He is some musician from the lower ranks of the orchestra—jolly, a great talker, and a bit of a drunkard; I don't know it is so, but I think I can see in his face that he has never done more than played on brass, and he looks to me as if he were always watching the leader of the orchestra."

"A cornet, or a second clarion!" said Joseph, bursting out laughing. "Well, whichever he is, he is a very pleasant companion."

"It is much more than you are then," said Consuelo, angrily. "Come, try to get sober, and let us say 'farewell,' but at all events let us go."

"The rain is falling in torrents—listen how it beats against the panes."

"I hope you are not going to fall asleep on the table," said Consuelo, shaking his shoulder and trying to awake him.

At this moment M. Mayer entered. "Well, well," said he gaily, "here is another bore. I thought I could have slept here, and gone on to-morrow to Chamb; but my friends here insist that I shall go on with them forthwith, since they assert that I am necessary to them for the arrangement of some special business which they have at Passau. I must yield to them. And on my word! my lads, I can give

no better advice to you, since I cannot have the pleasure of taking you on with me to Dresden, than that you would profit by the chance. I have still two places to offer you in my carriage, these gentlemen having their own. We shall be at Passau to-morrow morning; you will be near the Austrian frontier, and you will even be able to go down the Danube to Vienna in a boat at small expense and with no fatigue."

Joseph thought the proposition an admirable one to relieve Consuelo's swollen feet. The occasion seemed in fact to be a good one, and sailing down the Danube was a resource of which they had not yet thought. Consuelo therefore consented, seeing that Joseph would not agree to take any measures of precaution as to their lodging that night. In the darkness, huddled up in the corner of a carriage, she had no cause to fear from the observation of their travelling companions, and M. Mayer said that they should arrive at Passau before daybreak. Joseph was enchanted at her resolution. Still Consuelo felt, I know not what, of repugnance to her company, and the appearance of M. Mayer's friends by no means removed her distaste. She asked him if they were musicians, and he replied laconically,

"All of them, more or less."

They found the horses harnessed, the drivers on their seats, and the waiters of the inn, well satisfied with M. Mayer's liberality, bustling about him, with offers of service to the very last moment. In an interval of silence, in the midst of all this agitation, Consuelo heard a groan, which seemed to come from the middle of the courtyard. She turned round to Joseph who had not remarked anything; and this groan being a second time repeated, she felt a cold shudder run through all her limbs. Still she could not discover any person who had uttered these complaints, and began to attribute it to some dog wearied of remaining on his chain. For all that she could do, however, the sound had made a painful impression on her. The smothered complaint, uttered in the midst of deep darkness, of wind and rain, uttered from the centre of a group of persons, who were either animated or indifferent, without any possibility of her discovering whether it was a human outcry, or merely an imaginary sound, struck her at once with fear and sadness. She began at once to think of her betrothed, and, as if she believed herself capable of sharing those mysterious revelations with which he seemed to be endowed, felt alarmed at the thought of some danger menacing Albert or herself.

Nevertheless, the vehicle got under way at once; a stronger horse than the first drew it rapidly forward. The other carriage proceeding at an equal pace, went sometimes ahead, sometimes behind it. Joseph had begun to chatter anew with M. Mayer, and Consuelo, endeavoring to go to sleep, pretended to be asleep already, in order to have an excuse for holding silence. At length weariness overcame both sadness and disquietude, and she fell into a deep sleep.

When she awoke, Joseph was asleep also, and at last M. Mayer was silent. The rain had ceased, the heavens were clear, and the day was beginning to dawn. The country had an aspect which was entirely unknown to Consuelo. Only from time to time, she caught glimpses on the horizon of the summits of a mountain chain, which, as she thought, resembled the Böhmer-wald.

As gradually the effect of the lethargy which follows sleep passed away, Consuelo remarked, not without surprise, the position of these

mountains, which were on her right, when they ought to have been on her left. The stars had set, and the sun, which she expected to see rising in front of her, had not yet shown himself. She began to think that the hills she was looking at, must be a different chain from the Böhmer-wald; but M. Mayer was still snoring, and she did not dare to address the driver, who was the only person in the carriage now awake.

The horse fell to a foot's pace in mounting a very steep ascent, and the rumbling of the wheels was lost in the damp sand of the deep ruts. It was at this moment that Consuelo again heard the same stifed groan which she had previously remarked in the inn-yard at Biberach. The sound appeared to come from behind her; but as she turned round mechanically and saw nothing but the leathern cushion against which she was leaning, she fancied that she was the victim of some strange hallucination, and her thoughts continually falling back upon Albert, she persuaded herself, to her inexpressible pain, that he was in agony, and that she received, owing to the incomprehensible power of this strange man's passion, the mournful and heart-rending sound of his last sighs. This fancy so completely took possession of her understanding, that she felt herself on the point of fainting, and fearing that she should actually swoon away, she asked the driver, who had stopped half way up the hill, to allow her to ascend the rest of it on foot. He consented, and setting foot to the ground himself, he walked along beside the horse, whistling as he went.

This man was too well dressed to be a driver by profession; and Consuelo thought she perceived, in a sudden motion which he made, that he had pistols at his belt. This precaution, in a country so desert as that in which they were travelling, was entirely unnatural; and besides this, the form of the carriage, which Consuelo examined as she walked beside the wheel, clearly showed that it contained merchandize of some sort. It was so deep that there must have been in the rear of the back seat, a false box, like those in which despatches or valuable freight are carried. Nevertheless it did not appear to be very heavily loaded, since one horse drew it with ease. An observation which she made astonished Consuelo yet more; for she saw her shadow stretching out on the ground behind her, and as she turned round perceived that the sun was completely above the horizon, at a point diametrically opposite to that at which she had expected to see it, had the carriage really been going in the direction of Passau.

"In which direction are we going?" she asked the driver, approaching his side quickly. "Surely our backs are turned towards Austria."

"They are so, for about half-an-hour," said he. "We are turning back on our course, because the bridge by which we have to cross the river is broken, and we have to make a circuit of half a mile before we shall find another."

Consuelo, a little reassured by his words, got into the carriage, exchanged a few chance words with M. Mayer, who had awakened, and who soon fell asleep again—Joseph not having so much as stirred in his lethargic sleep; and they reached the summit of the slope. Consuelo now saw a long, steep, winding road unfold itself before her eyes, and the river, of which the driver had spoken, rolling along at the bottom of a deep gorge; but as far as the eye could reach, there was no bridge in sight, and the direction kept right on to the northward. Consuelo frightened anew, and more uneasy than before,

could not get to sleep again. A new ascent lay before them; and as the horse seemed very tired, all the travellers, except Consuelo, whose feet were still much swollen, got down to walk. Again the deep groan met her ears, but this time so clearly, and with so many repetitions, that she could no longer attribute it to any deception of her senses. The sound undoubtedly issued from the double seat of the carriage. She examined it carefully, and discovered in the corner in which M. Mayer sat a little leathern air-hole formed like a wicket, which communicated with the interior of the double bottom. She tried to open it but could not succeed, for it was locked, and the key was, probably, in the pocket of the pretended professor.

Consuelo, who was ever eager and ardent in adventures of this kind, drew from her fob a strong, sharp-bladed knife, with which she had provided herself before setting out, perhaps from an instinct of modesty, and with some vague apprehension of those worse dangers from which suicide may preserve an energetic and high-spirited woman. She took advantage of a moment when all the travellers, even to the driver, who had no longer anything to fear from the ardor of his horse, were far in advance up the road, and enlarging, with a prompt and steady hand, the crack between the cushion and the hinges of the wicket, placed her eye to the aperture, and looked into the mysterious place of concealment. What were her surprise and terror, when she distinguished, in that dark and narrow recess, which received air and light only by a crevice made in the top, a man of athletic frame, gagged, covered with blood, with his hands and feet securely pinioned, and his body doubled up in a position of restraint and anguish which must have been almost unendurable. All that she could discover of his face was remarkable only for its livid paleness and its expression of convulsive suffering.

CHAPTER LXXI.

LITERALLY petrified with terror, Consuelo leaped to the ground, and having overtaken Joseph, touched his elbow secretly as a hint to extricate himself from the group in his company. When they were a few steps ahead of the others, "We are lost," said she, "if we do not at once take flight. These people are robbers or assassins; I have just seen an actual proof of it. Let us double our pace, and strike across the fields, for they have reasons for deceiving us, as they are doing."

Joseph fancied that some odious dream had disturbed his companion's imagination; indeed he scarcely understood what she was saying to him, for he felt himself so languid and so much exhausted, that his sensations led him to suspect the wine which he had drank the preceding night to have been drugged by the landlord with heavy and intoxicating mixtures. It is certain, indeed, that he had made no such trespass on his habitual sobriety as to account for his languor and lethargy. "Dear signora," he replied, "you have the nightmare, and I believe I have it myself from listening to you. Even if these good folks were banditti, as it pleases you to consider them, what booty could they expect to gain by our seizure?"

"I know not, but I am afraid; and if you had seen as I have, a half murdered man in the same carriage with ourselves——"

At these words, Joseph burst out laughing; for this affirmation on Consuelo's part convinced him that she was dreaming.

"What! Do you not at least see that they are leading us astray?" she continued with animation; "that they are guiding us toward the north, while Passau and the Danube are behind us? Look at the sun, and see into how desert a country we are advancing, instead of into the neighborhood of a large city."

The justice of this observation at length struck Joseph, and began to dissipate the sort of lethargic stupor in which he was buried. "Well," said he, "let us go on; if they attempt to detain us against our will, we shall at least understand their intentions."

"And if we cannot escape them at once, Joseph, we must keep cool, do you understand me? We must try which are the subtler, we or they, and make our escape at some other time."

Then she drew him forward by the arm, pretending to be lamer than she really was, but still gaining ground on the others. They had not, however, made ten steps before they were called by M. Mayer, first in friendly tones, then harshly, and at last by the others with loud and energetic oaths. Joseph turned his head, and saw to his utter consternation a pistol levelled at him by the driver, who was running as hard as he could in pursuit of them.

"They are going to kill us," he exclaimed to Consuelo, slackening his pace as he spoke.

"Are we out of shot?" said she coolly, still drawing him forward and beginning to run.

"I do not know," said he, "but believe me the moment has not come; they will fire upon us." And he endeavored to stop her flight.

"Stop, or you are dead!" cried the driver, who ran much faster than they, and had them already within easy pistol-shot.

"It is time then to make up by self-assurance," said Consuelo, stopping short. "Joseph, speak and act as you see me do. Ah! upon my word!" she cried aloud as she turned laughing, with the ready laughter of a good actress, "if my feet did not hurt me too much to run any further, I would let you see that your joke goes for nothing." And then looking at Joseph, who was as pale as death, she affected to laugh at him with all her heart, showing his disturbed and dejected countenance to the other travellers who had overtaken them.

"He really believed it," she cried with perfectly well simulated gaiety. "He really believed it. My poor comrade. Ah! Beppo, I did not think you were such a poltroon. Ah! Monsieur Professor, look at Beppo, who really believed that monsieur was going to send a ball after him."

Consuelo affected to speak in Venetian, thus keeping the man with a pistol in some respect by her mirth, since he did not understand a word that she was saying.

Turning to the driver, Mayer said, "What a miserable joke this is—what is the use of frightening these poor children," with a wink of his eye, which did not escape the notice of Consuelo.

"I wanted to see if they had any courage," said the driver, returning his pistol to his belt.

"Alas!" said Consuelo slyly, "Monsieur will have a very bad opinion of you now, my friend Joseph. As to me, I have not been afraid, so do me justice on that score, Monsieur Pistolet."

"You are a brave 'ad," replied M. Mayer. "You would make a capital drummer, and would beat the charge at the head of your regiment without winking in the midst of the grape shot."

"Oh! for that I can't say," she replied. "Perhaps I should be afraid, if I had believed that monsieur was really going to shoot us. But we Venetians are up to all sorts of tricks, and cannot be caught thus."

"That is all one," said M. Mayer. "Still the joke was in bad taste; and addressing himself to the conductor, he seemed to scold him a little; but Consuelo was not deceived, for she understood by the intonation of their voices that an explanation was going on, the result of which seemed to be their conviction, that no flight was intended."

Consuelo having got into the carriage again with the rest, said to M. Mayer, "Admit now, that your driver with pistols is a curious subject. I shall call him Signor Pistola, after this. And now you must admit, Signor Professor, that it is not a very new game at which to play."

"It is a German joke," said M. Mayer. "In Venice folks have more wit than that, have they not?"

"Oh! do you know what the Italians would have done in your place, to play a good trick upon us? They would have dragged the carriage into the first bushes by the road-side, and would have all hid themselves there. Then when we returned, seeing no carriage, and supposing that the devil had carried everything away, who would have been caught then? Most of all, I, who am so lame that I can hardly walk, and next to myself, Joseph, who is as cowardly as a Böehmer-wald cow, and who would have fancied himself forsaken in the desert."

M. Mayer laughed at these childish witticisms, which he translated at full length to *Signor Pistola*, who was amused as much as he was himself at the simplicity of the *gondolier*. "Oh! you are too wide awake!" returned Mayer. "No one will trouble himself to play you any more tricks," and Consuelo, who could discover the concealed irony of the pretended jovial good man, through his frank air of paternal good nature, continued in playing her part of a simpleton, fancying herself clever, which is a well known fact in every melodrama."

It is certain that their adventure had become very serious; and even while she was playing her part with ability, Consuelo felt that she was almost in a fever. Fortunately, fever is a condition in which we act, lethargy is that in which we give way to circumstances. Thereafter, she continued to show herself as gay as she had previously been reserved, and Joseph, who seemed to have recovered his faculties, seconded her admirably. All the time appearing to entertain no doubt but that they were approaching Passau, they pretended to have an ear open to the propositions which M. Mayer continued to make to them, of proceeding to Dresden. By this means they gained his entire confidence, and even set him about devising some plan for informing them that he was taking them thither without their own permission. This expedient was soon found, for M. Mayer was no novice in abductions of this kind. Then passed a long dialogue between the three individuals, M. Mayer, Signor Pistola, and the silent man, in their unknown tongue, and after that, they all began to talk German, as if they were merely proceeding on the same topic. "I told you so," cried M. Mayer, "we have missed the road; a proof of which is, that their carriage does not overtake us. It is more than two hours

since we left them behind us, and looked all in vain from the summit of the hill, for there was nothing in sight."

"I cannot see anything of them," said the driver, putting his head out of the carriage and affecting to look back, after which he sat down again, looking annoyed and discouraged.

Consuelo had long before remarked from the first hill-top, that the other carriage, in company with which they had set forth from Berberach, had not made its appearance.

"I was sure we had lost our way," said Joseph, "but I would not say so."

"And why the devil would not you say so?" asked the driver, affecting to be very greatly displeased.

"Because it amused me," said Joseph, who was beginning to take his cue from Consuelo's innocent trickery. "It seems so droll to lose his way in a carriage, I thought one only did so afoot."

"Ah! well, it amuses me too; I would not care much, if we were on the road to Dresden."

"Nor I either, my lads, if I but knew where we are," said M. Mayer. "For I must confess I was by no means well pleased at going to Passau with my friends, and I should not be sorry to find that we had turned far enough off the road to feel ourselves constrained to show them no further civility."

"Upon my word, Monsieur Professor, it shall be just as you would have it; it is all your affair. If we are not in your way, and you still wish to have us to Dresden with you, I am ready to stick to you, if it were to the end of the world; and you, Bertoni, what say you to it?"

"I say the same," replied Consuelo,—"Sail on the bark, since we are once in it."

"You are brave lads," said Mayer, concealing his real joy under an air of absence, "but I would fain know where we are."

"Wherever we are," replied the driver, "we have got to stop; for the horse cannot go a yard farther; he has eaten nothing since yesterday, and has travelled all night long. We shall none of us be sorry great or small, to take a little refreshment here. Here is a little wood, let us stop and rest. We have got some provisions left. Halt here!"

They entered the wood—the horse was unharnessed. Joseph and Consuelo eagerly offered their aid. The carriage was let down so as to rest on the shafts, and the change rendered the position of the prisoner yet more painful. Consuelo again heard him groan, as did Mayer also, who looked steadily at Consuelo to see if she had observed it; but in despite of the pity which she felt to the bottom of her heart, she remained impassive. Mayer now walked round the carriage, and Consuelo saw him unlock a small door in the exterior of the vehicle, look into the secret compartments, lock it up again, and put the key in his pocket."

"Is our merchandise damaged?" asked the silent man of Mayer.

"All is well," replied the other, with cold indifference, and he at once applied himself to preparing for breakfast.

"Now," said Consuelo quickly to Joseph, as she passed closely beside him, "do as you see me do, and follow close on my steps," and she bustled about, arranging the provisions on the grass, and uncorking the bottles. M. Mayer was well pleased to see these volunteer servants devoting themselves to his pleasure, for Joseph affected to imitate his companion eagerly. For the pretended professor loved his ease, and applied himself to eat and drink with his companions with

greater gluttony, and greater coarseness of manner than he had displayed on the preceding evening. He held out his glass every minute or two to his new pages, who every minute, rose, sat down again, set forth once more, and ran about from place to place, watching an opportunity to run off once for all, but waiting until wine and the progress of digestion should render their dangerous guardians less clear-sighted. M. Mayer stretched himself out on the grass, and unbuttoned his vest, showing his broad chest well garnished with pistols, glittering in the sunshine. The driver went to see whether the horse was feeding well, and the silent man set out to seek a place in the muddy stream, by the banks of which they had stopped, where the horse could drink. This was their signal for flight. Consuelo pretended to be seeking with them also, and Joseph buried himself also in the underwood. Scarcely had they well concealed themselves among the dense foliage, before they began to run like two hares through the coppices. There was little danger of a bullet reaching them in that close underwood; and when they heard a shout recalling them, they judged themselves already far enough off to continue their flight without fear.

"We had better answer them," said Consuelo. "It will lull suspicion, and give us time to take another start of running."

Thereupon Joseph cried—"This way, this way—here is water—here is a spring." And, "A spring! a spring!" cried Consuelo. And instantly, striking off at a right angle to their former course, they fled lightly. Consuelo thought no more of her sore and swollen feet. Joseph had triumphed over the narcotic which M. Mayer had given him on the preceding day. Fear lent wings to their flight.

Thus they ran for about ten minutes, in a direction different from that which they had at first taken, not giving themselves the time to listen to the voices, which were calling after them, from two different sides, until they reached the skirts of the wood, and beyond that a very steep descending slope, covered with turf, having a beaten road, and moorlands interspersed with clumps of trees.

"Do not let us leave the wood," said Joseph. "They will soon be here, and they will be able to see us, in whatever direction we attempt to go."

Consuelo hesitated for a moment, surveying the country with a rapid glance, and said—"The wood is too small to shelter us long. There is a road before us, and on it we have a hope of meeting some one."

"Alas!" cried Joseph, "it is the very road along which we have been travelling. See, it winds round the hill, and ascends to the right toward the spot where we have come. If any one of them mount the horse, he will catch us before we reach the foot of the slope."

"We must try that," said Consuelo. "One runs quickly running down hill. I see something on the road yonder, something coming this way. We have only to reach it before we are ourselves overtaken, and we are in safety. Come."

There was no time to lose in deliberation. Joseph trusted to Consuelo's instinct, and the slope was descended in an instant—so quickly did they run. They had reached the cover of the first clump of trees when they heard the voices of their pursuers on the outside of the skirts of the wood. This time, they took good care to return no answer, but ran onward under the shelter of the bushes and trees, until they came to a runlet in very deep banks, which these same trees had concealed from them. A long plank bridged it, across which they ran, and then cast the plank back into the water.

Having reached the farther bank, they hurried down it, still sheltered from view by the thick vegetation, and not having any farther calls, they judged that they had either outstripped pursuit, or that their pursuers had discovered their intentions, and expected to take them by surprise. Ere long, however, the vegetation on the banks became thin, and ceased altogether; and they stopped, fearful of being discovered. Joseph advanced his head carefully from among the last bushes, and saw one of the brigands on the watch on the skirts of the wood, and the other, apparently Signor Pistola, of whose superior speed they had already made trial, at the foot of the hill, and not far distant from the rivulet. While Joseph was thus reconnoitering the position of the enemy, Consuelo had turned to watch the line of the high road. At this instant she came back to Joseph. "It is a carriage which is coming," she cried. "We are saved. We must reach it before our pursuers discover that we have crossed the water."

They ran down in a right line toward the high road, across the open ground. The carriage came toward them at a gallop. "Oh! Heaven!" exclaimed Joseph, "if this other carriage should contain their accomplices!"

"No," replied Consuelo. "It is a berlin, with six horses, two postilions, and two couriers. We are saved, I tell you, if you will but have a little courage."

It was, indeed, time that they should reach the road. Pistola had found the track of their feet in the sand by the rivulet's brink. He had the speed and strength of a wild boar, and following rapidly on their track, found the spot where their traces were lost, and the piles which had supported the plank. He easily divined the trick, passed the stream by swimming, and finding their footsteps again on the farther shore, pursued them still, until, on coming out of the bushes, he discovered them in full flight across the heather, but he discovered the carriage also, understood their plan, and feeling himself unable to oppose it, returned into the cover of the underwood, and held himself there on his guard.

At the cries of the two young persons, who were at first taken for beggars, the berlin did not stop. The travellers threw out some pieces of money, and the outriders seeing that they did not pick them up, but continued to run after the carriage, came on at a gallop to deliver their masters from the annoyance. Consuelo, entirely out of breath, and losing her strength, as so often happens, at the very moment when success seems certain, could not utter a word, but clasped her hands in supplication, still following the riders; while Joseph clung to the carriage door at the risk of losing his hold, and being crushed under the wheels, crying in a panting voice—"Help! help!"—we are pursued—robbers! assassins!" One of the two travellers, who sat in the berlin, caught some of his broken words, and made a sign to one of the couriers to stop the postilions. And then Consuelo, who had seized the bridle of one of the horses, to which she had clung in spite of the animal's curvetting, and the menace of the rider's whip, came up and joined Joseph, when her countenance, flushed and animated with running, struck both the travellers, who had already entered into conversation. "What is all this?" said one of them. "This is a new way of asking charity. We have already given you alms—what would you have more? Cannot you answer?"

Consuelo seemed ready to expire on the spot. Joseph, who was quite out of breath, could only cry—"Save us, save us!" and pointed to the woods and the hillside, still unable to enunciate a word.

"They look like foxes hard pressed in the chase," said the other of the two. "Let us wait till they recover their speech," and the two magnificently appareled lords looked down upon the poor fugitives with a smile, and a collected look, which was in strange contrast with the agitation of the poor fugitives.

At length Joseph recovered breath enough to articulate the words—"Robbers and assassins;" and thereupon the noble travellers ordered the carriage doors to be opened, and going out upon the steps, gazed in all directions, with an air of surprise which grew into astonishment, when they discovered nothing to justify such an alarm; for the brigands having concealed themselves, the country was entirely deserted and silent. At length Consuelo recovered breath enough to speak to them, though she was still obliged to pause at every phrase to collect herself.

"We are two poor travelling musicians," said she. "We have been carried off by men whom we do not know, and who, under the pretext of serving us, persuaded us to go into their carriage and obliged us to travel with them all night. At day-break we perceived that they were deceiving us and carrying us toward the north, instead of keeping the road to Vienna. We endeavored to fly, but they forced us back at the muzzle of the pistol. At last they stopped in yon wood—we escaped and ran down to your carriage. If you forsake us we are lost. They are within two or three steps of the road—one among the bushes, and the other in the woods."

"How many of them are there?" asked one of the outriders.

"My friend," replied one of the travellers in French—he to whom Consuelo had addressed herself, being the nearest to the place by which she was standing—"be so good as to remember that it is no concern of yours. How many are there?—a pretty question, truly! Your business is to fight if I desire you to do so, and I command you not to count the number of your enemies."

"Do you really mean to amuse yourself by laying about you?" said the other lord in French. "I think, baron, it takes time."

"It will not last long, and it will take the stiffness out of our limbs—will you be of the party, count?"

"Certainly, if you desire it," said the count, with a sort of majestic indolence, reaching his sword with one hand, and a pair of pistols, with jewelled stocks, with the other.

"Oh! you act nobly, gentlemen," cried Consuelo, whose impetuous spirit made her forget for a moment the humble part she was playing, and who pressed the count's arm with both her hands.

The count, surprised at such an act of familiarity from a little lad of her apparent rank, looked at his sleeve with a sort of contemptuous disgust, shook it, and then raised his eyes with a sort of contemptuous indolence to Consuelo's face. She could not help smiling, as she remembered with what eagerness the Count Zustiniani, and other most illustrious Venetians had asked her in past times permission, as the greatest of favors, to kiss those hands, the contact of which was now deemed so shocking. Whether at that moment there was in her manner a calm and gentle pride, which belied the outward semblance of poverty which she wore; or that the ease with which she spoke German with the accent of the best society, led the count to believe that she might be a young gentleman in disguise; or lastly, that the charm of her sex made itself instinctively perceived—instead of a smile of contempt, the count looked at her with a benevolent expres-

don. He was still young and very handsome, and had he not been surpassed by the baron in youth, in regularity of features, and in the graces of his person, any one might have been dazzled by his personal advantages. They were the two handsomest men of their day—so the world said of them, and probably of many others also.

Consuelo seeing that the eyes of the young baron were fixed upon her with an expression of uncertainty, surprise, and doubt, turned aside his attention from her person by saying—

“Go, messieurs, or rather come—we will be your guides. These bandits have a wretched man concealed in a compartment of their carriage, as if he were in a dungeon. He is gagged, tied hand and foot, covered with blood, and apparently dying. Go and deliver him. It is a deed becoming hearts so noble as yours.”

“By Heaven! the boy is very graceful!” cried the baron; “and I see, my dear count, that we have lost nothing by listening to him. Perhaps it is some brave gentleman, whom we shall deliver from the hands of these brigands.”

“Do you say that they are there?” asked the count, pointing towards the woods.

“Yes,” said Joseph; “but they are dispersed, and if your lordship will listen to me you will divide your attack. You will ascend the hill as quickly as you can, and on turning the summit you will find on the outer-skirt of the wood, on the opposite side, the carriage in which the prisoner is confined; while I will conduct these gentlemen on horseback directly upon them across the country. The bandits are but three in number, but they are well armed. Yet they will scarcely dare to resist, when they find themselves attacked on two sides at once.”

“The advice is good,” said the baron. “Count, remain in the carriage and let your servant go with you—I will get upon his horse. One of these boys will accompany you to show you where to halt—I will take this one as my guide. Let us make haste; for if our brigands take the alarm, as it is most like they will, they will get the start of us.”

“The carriage cannot escape us,” observed Consuelo quietly; “for their horse is grazing.”

The baron leaped on the charger, from which the count’s servant dismounted; on which the latter got up behind the carriage.

“Get in,” said the count to Consuelo, causing her to get in the first, without being able to explain to himself that unusual deference—nevertheless, he sat down on the back seat, while she took the front. Leaning over the carriage door, while the postilions put their horses to a dashing gallop, he pursued his companion with his eye, as he crossed the rivulet on horseback, followed by his man, who had taken Joseph *en croupe*, in order to cross the water. Consuelo was not without some apprehension for her young friend, seeing him thus exposed to a first fire; but she saw with esteem and approbation the zeal with which he had claimed that post of peril. She saw him ascend the hillock followed by the two horsemen, spurring their chargers vigorously; and the next moment they were all three lost to sight in the woods. Then two shots were heard, and a moment after a third. The berlin turned the summit of the hill, and Consuelo, unable to learn what was going on, raised her soul to God; while the count, equally anxious for his noble comrade shouted and swore at the postilions—“Gallop! gallop! then, harder yet—*Canailles!* Gallop at your speed, I say!”

CHAPTER LXXII.

SIGNOR PISTOLA, to whom we can give no other name than that by which Consuelo had designated him—for we have found nothing interesting enough in his character to induce us to make any enquiries concerning him—had seen, from the place where he lay hid, the berlin stop at the cries of the fugitives. The other nameless person, whom with Consuelo we shall term the silent man, had made the same observation from the top of the hill, and ran to tell Mayer what he had seen, and to concert with him the plans for their escape. Before the baron had crossed the rivulet, Pistola had gained some distance, and had hidden himself in the woods. He allowed the horsemen to pass him, and then fired two pistol shots at them deliberately from behind. One ball passed through the baron's hat, the other slightly wounded the servant's horse. The baron turned his charger, caught sight of the man, galloped up to him, and stretched him on the ground by a pistol shot, where he left him, rolling among the thorns with fearful imprecations, to follow Joseph, who reached M. Mayer's carriage nearly at the same moment with the count's berlin. The latter had already leaped to the ground; but Mayer and the silent man had already taken to flight with the horse, without taking time to attempt the concealment of the carriage. The first care of the conquerors was to force the lock of the compartment in which the prisoner was confined. Consuelo joyfully assisted in cutting the cords and removing the gag of the unhappy wretch, who no sooner felt himself delivered than he cast himself at the feet of his liberators thanking God and them. But so soon as he saw the baron he fancied he had fallen from Charybdis into Scylla. "Ah, Monsieur Baron de Trenck!" cried he, "do not destroy me—do not give me up. Mercy mercy! for a poor deserter, who is the father of a family. I am no more a Prussian than you, Monsieur Baron. Like you, I am an Austrian subject, and I implore you not to have me arrested. Oh! have mercy upon me!"

"Have mercy upon him, Monsieur le Baron Trenck," cried Consuelo without having any idea to whom she was speaking, or what was the subject of debate.

"I pardon you," replied the baron; "but on the condition that you bind yourself by the most solemn oaths, never to confess that you owe your life and liberty to me." And as he spoke thus, the baron, drawing a handkerchief from his pocket, wrapped up his face carefully, only suffering one eye to be seen beneath it.

"Are you wounded?" asked the count.

"No," replied he, slouching his hat over his face; "but if we meet these pretended brigands, I have no desire to be recognised by them. I do not stand too well, as it is, on the papers of our most gracious sovereign, and this is all that would be necessary to ruin me."

"I understand what you mean," answered the count; "but be under no apprehensions. I take everything upon myself."

"That would be quite enough to save a deserter from the cat-o'-nine tails or the gallows, but not to preserve me from disgrace. But it does not matter. No one knows what will happen next. A man ought to oblige his fellow at all hazards. Come, poor devil; can you keep your feet? Not too well, I see. Are you wounded?"

"In several places—but I do not feel it now."

"In a word, can you manage to crawl away?"

"Oh! yes, monsieur aid-de-camp."

"Do not call me so, fellow. Be silent, and begone. and let us, my dear count, do the same. I shall not be easy till I am out of this wood. I have knocked over one of his recruiters—if the king should learn it, I should be in a nice place, should I not? Yet, after all, I laugh at it," he added, shrugging up his shoulders.

"Alas!" said Consuelo, while Joseph passed his gourd of wine to the deserter—"if he is abandoned here, he will be retaken instantly. His feet are still swelled in consequence of his ligatures, and he can hardly use his hands. See how pale and exhausted he is."

"We will not abandon him," said the count, who could not keep his eyes off Consuelo.—"Franz," he added, speaking to his servant, "dismount from your horse; and do you," turning to the deserter—"get upon his back. I give him to you, and this also,"—throwing him his purse. "Are you strong enough to make good your way to Austria?"

"Oh! yes, monseigneur."

"Do you intend to go to Vienna?"

"Yes, Monseigneur."

"Do you wish to take service again?"

"Yes, monseigneur, if it be not under his Majesty of Prussia."

"Go then to her Majesty, the Queen Empress; she receives every one once a week. Tell her that the Count Hoditz makes her a present of a fine grenadier, perfectly disciplined in the Prussian style."

"I go, monseigneur."

"And take care you be not so unlucky as to mention, monsieur, the baron's name, or I will have you taken by my people, and sent back into Prussia."

"I would rather die at once. Oh! if those wretches had left me the use of my hands, I would have killed myself when I was retaken."

"Be off."

"Yes, monseigneur."

He finished the contents of the gourd, returned it to Joseph, without knowing who it was that had rendered him so important a service, prostrated himself before the count and the baron, and at a gesture of impatience made by the latter, signed the cross, kissed the earth, and mounted his horse by the aid of the servants, for he was still unable to move his feet; but no sooner was he in the saddle, than recovering his faculties, he set spurs to his horse, and went off at a hard gallop on the southern road.

"This, at all events, will complete my ruin, should it ever be discovered that I allowed you to do this. It is all one," he added. "The idea of making a present to Maria Theresa of one of Frederick's grenadiers, is delightful. The same madcap who sent bullets to the Hulus of the Empress, will send them next to the King of Prussia's body-guard. Faithful subjects, and well-chosen soldiers on my honor!"

"The sovereigns will be none the worse served. But now, then, what are we to do with these children?"

"We can say, with the grenadier," replied Consuelo, "if you abandon us we are lost."

"I do not think," replied the count, who spoke with a sort of

affectation of chivalry, "that we have given you any reason, thus far, to doubt our sentiments of humanity. We are about to carry you so far, that you will need no farther protection. My servant, whom I have dismounted, will ride on the rumble of the carriage," said he, addressing the baron, and immediately added—"do not you prefer the society of these children to that of the footman, whom we shall be obliged to admit into the carriage, and whose presence will greatly constrain us?"

"Unquestionably," replied the baron. "Artists, however poor they may be, are never out of place in any society. Who knows, if he who has just picked up his violin among those bushes, and who is bringing it back with such an air of triumph, may not be a Tartini in disguise. "Now, troubadour," said he to Joseph, who had just repossessed himself of his knapsack, his instrument, and his manuscripts on the field of battle, "come with us, and, at your first night's lodging, you shall sing us this glorious combat, in which we have encountered no one to whom to speak."

"You may quiz me as much as you please," said the count, when they were installed in the back of the carriage—the young people occupying the front seat—while the berlin was rolling as fast as it could, on the road to Austria; "you who have robbed the gallows of its game, by your pistol shot."

"I am very much afraid that I did not kill him dead, and that I shall meet him some day or other at the door of Frederick's cabinet. Then I shall have much pleasure in making my exploit over to you."

"I, who have not so much as seen the enemy, envy you your plot sincerely," said the count. "I had taken quite a fancy for the adventure, and I should have had much pleasure in punishing the scoundrels as they deserve. To come and seize deserters, and levy recruits in the territories of Bavaria, which is now the faithful ally of Maria Theresa, is a piece of insolence which has hitherto wanted even a name."

"It would be a ready-made cause of war, if the kings were not tired of fighting, and if the times were not peaceful just now. You will therefore oblige me greatly, by giving no currency to this adventure, not only on account of my sovereign, who would owe me very little favor for the part I have borne in it, but also on account of the mission with which I am charged to your empress. I should find her, I fancy, very ill-disposed to receive me, if I should approach her, when she had just heard of such an act of impertinence on the part of my government."

"Fear nothing from me," said the count. "You know I am not a very zealous subject, because I am not an ambitious courtier."

"And what ambition would you have any longer? Love and fortune have both crowned your every wish; while I—ah! how different are our fortunes hitherto, notwithstanding the analogy which they present at the first aspect."

As he spoke the baron drew from his breast a miniature, set with diamonds, and began contemplating it with eyes of tenderness, uttering deep sighs, which had very nearly set Consuelo laughing; for she did not think so indiscreet a passion in very good taste, and could not help internally making merry with that ultra-aristocratical manner.

"My dear baron," said the count, lowering his voice, while Consuelo did her utmost to avoid showing that she understood him, "I beseech you to grant the confidence with which you have honored

me, to no other person; and more especially, to show that portrait to no other. Put it back into its case, and remember that this boy understands French as well as you or I."

"By the way," said the baron, shutting up the miniature which Consuelo had carefully avoided seeing, "what the devil could our friends the recruiters have wanted to do with these two little boys? Tell us, what did they promise, to induce you to go with them?"

"In truth," said the count, "I never thought of that; but it is strange enough, that they who never desire to enlist others than men in the prime and strength of manhood, and that too of gigantic stature, should have desired to enrol two little boys."

Thereupon Joseph related how Mayer, as he called himself, had pretended to be a professor of music, and had constantly talked to them of Dresden, and an engagement in the Elector's chapel.

"Oh! now I see; and I would lay a wager that I know this Mayer," said the baron. "He must be a fellow of the name of N*, formerly a band-master, and now a recruiter of music for the Prussian regiments. Our countrymen have such hard heads that there is no getting them to play in time or tune; and if his Majesty, who has a nicer ear than the late king his father, did not draw his clarions, fifes and trumpets from Bohemia or Hungary, he would scarce get a band at all. The good professor of brass-flourishes thought to make a nice present to his master, bringing him back not only a deserter but two intelligent-looking little musicians; and the false pretext of offering them Dresden and the luxuries of a court was not a bad falsehood to begin with. But had you once got to Dresden, my lads, willing or unwilling, you would have been incorporated in the band of some infantry regiment or other, only until the end of your days."

"I know not what sort of fate should have awaited us," replied Consuelo. "I have heard tell of the abominations of that military rule; of the ill-faith and cruelty with which recruits are raised. And I see, by the manner in which those villains treated that unhappy grenadier, that what I heard was in no sort exaggerated. Oh! this Frederick the Great!"

"Learn young man," replied the baron, with an ironical emphasis, "that his majesty is ignorant of the means, and is acquainted only with the results."

"By which he profits, caring nothing for aught else," cried Consuelo, fired by an irrepressible indignation. "Oh! I know it, Monsieur Baron. I know that kings are innocent of all the crimes which are committed for their pleasure."

"The lad has wit," said the count, laughing; "but have a care, my pretty little drummer, and remember that you are speaking in the presence of a superior officer of the regiment to which perhaps you would have belonged."

"Knowing how to be silent myself, Monsieur Count, I never entertain a doubt of the discretion of others."

"Do you hear him, baron? He promises you that silence, which you never thought of asking of him. Come, he is a charming lad."

"And I trust myself to him with all my heart," said the baron. "Count, you ought to enroll him yourself, and offer him as a page to her highness."

"It is done, if he consents," said the count laughing. "Will you accept this engagement, which is very much lighter than that in the Prussian service? Ah! my lad, there is no question of blowing into

brass, beating to arms before daybreak, being caned, or eating bread made of pounded bricks, but of carrying the train and fan of an admirably beautiful and gracious lady, of dwelling in a fairy palace, of being president over sports and frolics, and playing your part in concerts worth fifty times those of Frederick the Great. Are you tempted? At all events, do not take me for a second M. Mayer."

"And who is this gracious and magnificent highness, whom I shall be called upon to serve?" asked Consuelo with a smile."

"It is the dowager Margravine of Bareith, Princess of Culmbach, my wife," replied Count Hoditz. "She is now Chatelaine of Roswald, in Moravia."

Consuelo had heard the Canoness Wenceslawa de Rudolstadt relate the genealogies, alliances, and anecdotal history of all the principalities and aristocracies, both great and small, of Germany and the circumjacent countries, above a hundred times; and among others that of the Count Hoditz Roswald—a very rich Moravian lord, exiled and abandoned by a father irritated at his conduct—an adventurer widely known throughout Europe; and to conclude, the high chamberlain, lover, and ultimately husband of the Margravine, dowager of Bareith, whom he had secretly married, carried off to Vienna, and thence into Moravia, where having recently inherited from his father, he had been recently put in possession of a splendid fortune. The canoness had often dwelt on the details of this story, which she regarded as especially scandalous, because the Margravine was a sovereign princess, and the count no more than a private gentleman; and to declaim against all *mesalliances* and love marriages, was a very favorite subject with her. On her side, Consuelo, who was anxious to understand and to be well informed concerning the prejudices of the noble caste, took heed of all their legends, and forgot none of them. The very first time the name of the Count Hoditz had been mentioned before her, she had been struck by a vague reminiscence, and now she had clearly before her mind's eye, all the circumstances of the life, and romantic marriage of the celebrated adventurer; of the Baron Trenck, who was only then on the verge of his memorable misfortunes, and who could not even presage the horrors that were to befall him, she had never even heard tell. She listened, therefore to the count, as he descanted with vanity enough on the circumstances of his newly acquired wealth. Laughed at and despised for a long time in the small, but haughty courts of Germany, Hoditz had blushed for years at being considered a poor devil of an adventurer, enriched by his wife. The inheritor of enormous wealth, he now looked upon himself as completely restored, while he displayed the pomp and luxury of a monarch on the estate of his Moravian county; and complacently produced his new titles for the respectful or curious consideration of the second-rate crowned heads, who were immeasurably poorer than himself. Full of kind considerations and delicate attentions to a wife, who was much older than himself; whether that princess had the good principles and good taste of the king, which led her to wink at the occasional infidelity of her illustrious husband, or that she thought that, owing his nobility to her, he could never close his eyes upon the decline of her beauty, she took no heed of his fancies.

After travelling a few leagues, they found a relay of horses ready for the illustrious travellers; Consuelo and Joseph now proposed to get down and take their leave, but their patrons objected, saying that

they were still liable to the attempts of the recruiters, with whom the country is overrun.

"You know nothing," said Trenck to them—and he by no means exaggerated—"of this able and formidable class. On whatever spot of civilized Europe you set foot, if you are poor and defenceless, if you possess either strength or talent, you are exposed to the deceit or the violence of these men. They know all the frontier passes—all the mountain roads, all the byways, all the suspicious lodgings, all the villains whose aid they can depend upon in cases of necessity, even to the strong hand. They speak all languages, all provincial dialects, for they have visited all nations, and dwell after their fashions in all trades. They are excellent riders, runners, swimmers; they can throw themselves over precipices like actual banditti. They are, as a rule, all brave, all seasoned to fatigue, clever and impudent liars, vindictive, pliable, and cruel. They are the very refuse of the human race, by whom the military organization of the late king of Prussia, William the First, profited as the most useful purveyors to its power, and the most important auxiliaries of its discipline. They would catch him a deserter in the extremity of Siberia, or would seek him in the hottest of the enemy's fire, for the mere pleasure of bringing him back to Prussia, and having him hanged in *terrorem*. They tore a priest from the altar, because he was five feet ten in height; they stole a physician from the princess electoral; they drove the old Margrave of Bareith half frantic ten times over, by carrying off from him his whole army, twenty or thirty thousand strong, without his daring to demand explanations; they made a French gentleman, who was going to see his wife and children in the environs of Strasburgh, a soldier to the day of his death; they have taken Russians from the Czarina Elizabeth, Hulons from the Mareschal of Saxony, Pandours from Maria Theresa, magnates of Hungary, Polish lords, Italian singers, women of all nations, compulsory wives, like the Sabines of old, for the common soldiers. Everything is game that falls into their net. Besides their appointments, and the expenses of their journeys, which are paid most liberally, they receive a premium *per capita* furnished; nay, more, by the inch and barleycorn of height of each recruit——"

"Yes," said Consuelo, "they furnish human flesh, at so much the ounce weight. Ah! your great king is but an ogre! But rest easy, Monsieur Baron. Be you assured that you did a good action, when you restored our poor deserter to liberty. For me, I had rather undergo all the penalties that awaited him, than say one word that should injure you."

Trenck, whose fiery spirit was but slenderly tempered by prudence, and whose temper was already soured by the incomprehensible cruelties and injustice of Frederick toward him, felt a bitter pleasure in revealing to Count Hoditz the crimes of that government, whose accomplice and servant he had been in days of prosperity, when his conscience was less easily pricked than at present. Now persecuted in secret, though ostensibly owing to the confidence of the king his honorable diplomatic mission to the court of Maria Theresa, he began to detest his master, and to suffer his opinions to appear too plainly. He related to the count the sufferings, the slavery, and the despair of the Prussian army, which, precious in war, was so dangerous in time of peace, that it had become necessary, in order to keep it under any sort

have recourse to a system of

unexampled barbarity. He related the epidemic of suicide which had spread through the army, and the crimes committed by soldiers otherwise honest and religious men, for the mere purpose of getting themselves condemned to death, and of so escaping a life too horrible for endurance. Would you believe that the ranks which are under surveillance, are those most anxiously desired? For you must know that these ranks, under surveillance, are composed of foreign recruits, of men carried off from their own homes, or of young Prussians, who, during the earlier part of a career, which is only to end with life, are a prey for the most-part to absolute despair. These are divided into ranks and whether in peace or in war, are made to march before a line of men more resigned to their fate and more determined, who have orders to fire upon them at the slightest indication of their flying, or attempting to desert. If the rank charged with this execution neglect their duty, the rear rank, which is composed of men yet more insensible and cruel—for there are such among the old hardened soldiers and the volunteers, most of whom are scoundrels—has orders to fire on both indiscriminately. Thus every rank in the army has, on the day of battle, an enemy in front and an enemy in the rear, now, were equals, comrades, or brothers in arms, but everywhere violence, dismay and death! "It is thus," said the great Frederick, "that an invincible soldiery is formed." Well! a place in these front ranks is coveted and sought out by the young Prussian soldier; and so soon as he is stationed in one of these, without entertaining the slightest hope of escape, he disbands and throws away his arms to draw upon himself the fire of his comrades. This movement of despair has saved many, who, risking all to gain all, succeed in escaping, and often pass over to the enemy. The king is not in the slightest doubt as to the detestation in which the army hold himself and his yoke of iron; and you are, perhaps, acquainted with the anecdote relating to himself and to his nephew, the Duke of Brunswick, who was present at one of his great reviews, and appeared never to wax weary of admiring the admirable combination, and superb manœuvres of his troops. "The discipline and the working of such a mass of fine-looking men, appears to surprise you," said Frederick. "But there is something that surprises me much more." "What is that?" asked the young duke. "It is that you and I should be in safety in the midst of them," answered the king.

"Baron, my dear baron," replied the Count Hoditz, "this is the reverse of the medal. Nothing is done miraculously among men. How should Frederick be the greatest captain of his day, if he were as gentle as a dove? Hold!—say no more; or you will compel me, who am his natural enemy, to take his part against you, who are his aid-de-camp and his favorite."

"According to the mode in which he treats his favorites, when he is in a whimsical humor," replied Trenck, "it is easy to judge how he treats his slaves. But, as you say, let us speak of him no more; for when I do think, a sort of devilish desire seizes me to return into the woods, and strangle with my own hands his zealous purveyors of human flesh, whom I spared through a cowardly prudential policy."

The generous indignation of the baron charmed Consuelo; she listened eagerly to his animated pictures of Prussian military life; and being ignorant that some personal resentment was intermingled with his spirited vehemence, she looked on it as the evidence of a truly great soul. And in truth, there was much real greatness of soul

in Trench's feelings. Proud as he was handsome, that youth was never meant to grovel; and, in this respect there was a vast difference between him and the chance companion of his journey, the rich and superb Count Hoditz. The latter having been during his whole boyhood the terror and despair of his preceptors, had been at last given up to himself, and although he had now passed the age of noisy outbreaks, he preserved in his manners and deportment something boyish which stood in strange contrast to his herculean stature, and his fine features, something faded by forty years of toils and debaucheries. The superficial knowledge which he displayed from time to time, he had derived only from romances, fashionable philosophy, and constant attendance at the theatre. He prided himself on being an artist, yet wanted both the discernment and depth of an artist, in every respect. Notwithstanding all this, his air of nobility, his exquisite affability, his delicate and lively ideas soon acted on young Haydn's imagination, who preferred him to the baron, perhaps not a little on account of the superior degree of attention paid to the latter by Consuelo.

The baron on the contrary had studied in earnest, and if the glare of courts and the heat of youth had at times dazzled him as to the true weight and worth of human dignities, he had ever preserved within his inmost soul that independence of sentiment and equity of character which serious reading and noble instincts, developed by education, are wont to bestow. His proud character had failed to resist the petrifying influences of the caresses and flatteries of power but it had remained unsubdued by the attempts to bend, so that at the least touch of injustice, it had arisen against the blow only the more fierce and fiery. The handsome page of Frederick had only touched his lip with the poisoned chalice; but love, a true, a rash, and impassioned love, had reanimated his audacity and his perseverance. Touched to the most feeling nerve of his heart, he had raised his head, and face to face, defied the tyrant who had desired to bring him to his knees.

At the date of our tale, he seemed not to have passed his twentieth year at the farthest. A forest of dark hair which he had refused to sacrifice to the childish discipline of Frederick, overshadowed his broad forehead. His figure was superb, his eyes sparkling, his moustache as black as ebony; his hand as white as alabaster, though strong as that of a Greek athlete, his voice as fresh and manly as his features, his ideas and his hopes of love. Consuelo pondered over that mysterious love, which was forever on his lips; and which, the more she observed him, she thought the less ridiculous, on account of the blending of natural vehemence, and of distrust but too well founded which set a perpetual warfare between himself and his fortunes. She even felt an inexpressible curiosity to know the mistress of that young man's secret thoughts, and surprised herself sending up sincere prayers for the success and triumph of the lovers. She did not find the day so long as she had expected to in a tiresome situation, *vis-à-vis* to two persons of a rank so different from her own. She had acquired in Venice the comprehension, and at Riesenbergh, the practice, of politeness, of the gentle manners, and well-toned conversation, which are the bright side of what was called in those days, exclusively good company.

While holding herself on her reserve, and only speaking when spoken to she felt much at her ease, and made her reflections inter-

nally on all that passed before her eyes. Neither the baron nor the count appeared to suspect her disguise. The first, paid in fact little or no attention, either to her or to Joseph. If he addressed a few words to them, he continued the conversation, turning round to the count; and indeed, while talking with enthusiasm, he very often seemed to forget him also, and to converse with his own thoughts, like a soul which feeds itself on its own fires. As to the count, he was by turns as grave as a crowned head, and as frivolous as a French marchioness. He drew his tablets from his pocket and took notes with all the gravity of a diplomatist; and again he hummed them over in tune, so that Consuelo perceived them to be little poems in gallant and high-flown French. Then he would read them over to the baron, who lauded them to the skies without listening to them; and again he would ask Consuelo good-naturedly, what was her opinion of them. "How do you like them, my little friend? You understand French, don't you?"

Consuelo, who was annoyed by this false condescension, which seemed anxious to dazzle her, could not resist her desire to point out two or three errors in one of his quatrains on beauty. Her mother had taught her to pronounce and enunciate clearly the languages which she sang herself with ease, and even with elegance. Consuelo, studious, and seeking for harmony in everything, according to the dictates of her own highly musical organization, had found in books the key and rule to all these divers languages. She had above all examined into their prosody, by exercising herself in the translation of their lyric poetry, and adjusting foreign words to national airs, so as to make herself fully acquainted with rhythm and accent. She had thus arrived at a full understanding of the rules of versification in several languages, and it was no difficult task to her to point out the errors of the Moravian Poet. Astonished at her knowledge, yet unable to bring himself to mistrust his own, Hoditz consulted the baron concerning the opinions of the little musician, to which he was perfectly capable of giving the preference. From that moment the count occupied himself entirely with Consuelo, though he still did not appear to suspect her real age or sex. He only asked, where *he* had been educated, to understand so well the rules of Parnassus.

"At the free school of the Venetian chapters."

"It seems to me that they carry their schoolings farther there than they do in Germany. And where was your comrade instructed?"

"In the cathedral at Vienna," said Joseph.

"My children," said the count, "I think that you both possess intelligence and aptitude in a high degree. At our first halting stage, I will examine you in music, and if you come up to the promise given by your countenances and manners, I engage you for my orchestra, or my theatre of Roswald. I will actually present you to the princess, my wife. Aha! what say you to that? it will be a veritable fortune ready made for two lads like you."

Consuelo was taken with a great desire to laugh at the idea of the count undertaking to examine herself and Haydn in music. And it was only by dint of a great effort that she could stifle her entertainment by affecting to bow most respectfully. Joseph perceiving the advantageous consequences to himself of his second proposal, thanked him and did not refuse. The count resumed his tablets and read to Consuelo half of a singularly hideous Italian operetta, full of barbarisms, which he proposed to set to music himself, and to have per-

formed on his wife's birthday by his own actors, in his own theatre, in his own castle, or to speak more correctly, in his own royal residence; for considering himself a prince, by right of marriage with the Margravine, he spoke of himself in no other capacity.

Consuelo touched Joseph from time to time with her elbow, in order to draw his attention to the blunders of the count, and utterly wearied out with his absurdity, could not help wondering to herself whether that famous beauty, the hereditary Margravine of Bareith, and princess dowager of Culmbach, must be a very silly sort of person, despite all her titles, her gallantries, and her years, to suffer herself to be seduced by madrigals so poor as these.

As he read and declaimed aloud, the count kept swallowing sugar plums to moisten his throat, and continually offered them to the young travellers, who being desperately hungry, as having eaten nothing since the preceding day, took those suckshaws which were more suitable to provoke than to satiate the appetite, for want of anything better, thinking continually that it was no easy matter to determine whether the count's sweetmeats or his rhymes were the least unpalatable viands.

At length, when the day was closing, the forts and steeples of that town of Passau, which that very morning Consuelo scarcely hoped ever to see, began to be apparent on the horizon. That sight, after so many trials and dangers as they had undergone, was almost as delightful to her, as would have been at another moment that of Venice, and as they crossed the Danube she could not resist the temptation of giving Joseph a push with her hand.

"Is he your brother?" asked the count, who had never before thought of enquiring.

"Yes, monseigneur," Consuelo made answer at once, in order to get rid of his inquisitive questions.

"You are not at all like each other, nevertheless," said the count.

"It is not so uncommon a thing for children to be unlike their fathers," replied Joseph merrily.

"Were you brought up together?"

"No, monseigneur—in a wandering life like ours, one is brought up as he can, and when he can."

"I know not why I think so," said the count to Consuelo, lowering his voice as he spoke, "but I cannot but believe that you are well born. Everything in your appearance and language announces something of natural distinction."

"I know not how I was born," she answered with a light laugh. "But I suppose I was born a musician from father to son, for there is nothing on earth that I love but music."

"Wherefore are you dressed as a Moravian peasant?"

"Because my travelling clothes being worn out, I bought the first I could find at a fair."

"Have you been in Moravia, then?—Perhaps you have, even to Roswald?"

"Near it, monseigneur—yes, I have," said Consuelo mischievously—"I perceived from afar off, and without daring to approach them, your superb demesnes, your statues, cascades, gardens, mountains—nay! but I know not what marvels—in truth, a very fairy palace."

"You have seen all that!" said the count, astonished, and forgetting that Consuelo, having heard him describing all the delights of his residence, during two whole hours, could have no difficulty in describing it on his authority without risk of discovery."

"That must assuredly then give you a desire to return thither."

"I am dying with a wish to do so, since I have had the good fortune to become known to you," said Consuelo, who wanted to pay him off by a little mockery for the reading of his opera which he had inflicted on her.

She leaped lightly out of the barque in which they crossed over crying out with an exaggerated German accent—"O, Passau, I salute thee."

The berlin carried them to the house of a rich lord, a friend to the count, who was absent for the moment, but whose house was ready for their occupation. They were expected, and the servants were already busy preparing supper, which was almost immediately set on the table. The count, who took great pleasure in the society of his little musician, as he called Consuelo, would have desired to bring her to table, but the fear of annoying the baron prevented him; Consuelo and Joseph were, however, well contented to eat in the offices, and made no difficulty about sitting down with the servants. Joseph indeed had never been treated with more respect by the great nobles who had employed him at their feasts; and although the sense of his art had elevated his heart enough to enable him to perceive the outrage that was done him, he never forgot, and that without feeling any shame of it, that his mother had been the cook of the Count Harrach, the lord of his village. Even at a later day, when his genius was fully expanded, Haydn was but a little better appreciated by his protectors, as a man, although as an artist he was admired all over Europe. He was eight-and-twenty years in the service of the Prince Esterhazy, and when we say in the service, we do not mean in the quality of musician only. Paër saw him with a napkin under his arm and a sword by his side, waiting behind his master's chair, and performing all the duties of a *maitre d'hôtel*, that is to say of first valet, according to the custom of the age and the country.

Consuelo on the contrary, had never eaten with servants since her journeys as a child with her mother the Zingara. She amused herself much with the fine airs which these village lackeys assumed, who held themselves degraded by the company of the two little strollers, and who not only put them at the worst end of the table, but served them with the worst morsels. Their good appetite, and natural frugality caused them however to think these excellent, and their good-humor having disarmed the pride of the serving men, they were requested to make some music to amuse messieurs, the lackeys, at their dessert. Joseph at once avenged himself of their previous grudge by playing the violin very obligingly, and Consuelo herself, no longer feeling anything of her sufferings and agitations of the morning, began to sing, when word was brought that the count and the baron wanted some music for their own diversion. There was no possibility of refusing. After the aid which the two lords had given them, Consuelo would have considered any hesitation on her part a piece of gross ingratitude, and moreover to make a pretext of fatigue or hoarseness would not have answered, since their voices rising from the offices to the parlor had doubtless long since reached the ears of the masters.

She followed Joseph, therefore, who like herself had made up his mind to play his part to his best during their pilgrimage; and when they had entered a handsome dining-room where, by the light of twenty wax candles, the two nobles sat leaning their elbows on the board, with their last bottle of Hungarian wine before them, they stood at the

door like musicians of low grade, and began to sing the little Italian duets which they had studied together in the mountains. "Attention! Joseph," cried Consuelo, mischievously. "Remember that Monsieur le Comte wishes to examine us; let us try to acquit ourselves creditably."

The count was much flattered by this reflection; the baron had placed the portrait of his mysterious dulcinea on his revered plate, and did not appear at all disposed to listen.

Consuelo was on her guard against displaying either the full compass of her voice or the full extent of her resources. Her pretended sex did not admit of tones so soft and liquid, nor was her assumed age consistent with such an amount of talent and science. She counterfeited a boy's voice, somewhat hoarse and deteriorated by premature exertion. It, moreover, amused her to imitate the artless inaccuracies, and temerities of misapplied ornaments, which she had so often heard committed by children in the streets of Venice. But, although she desported herself wondrously in that species of musical parody, there was so much natural taste in her whimsicalities, and the duet was sung with so much spirit and concert, that the baron, who really was a musician, and of a fine artistic organization, replaced his miniature in his bosom, raised his head, fidgetted in his chair, and ended by clapping his hands violently, and crying out that it was the truest and most feeling music he had ever heard. Count Hoditz, however, whose head was full of Fuchs, Rameau, and his classic authors, did not equally appreciate either the style of the composition or the method of rendering it. He thought in his own mind that the baron was a northern barbarian, and that his two *protegees* were sufficiently intelligent scholars, but that by his own lessons he should have to elevate them out of the mire of ignorance. It was his mania to form his artists by his own teaching, and he said with a sententious shake of the head, "There is something pretty good in this—but there will be very much to correct. Well! well! we will soon arrange all that!" He pictured to himself that Joseph and Consuelo were already his own private property, and a portion of his choir. He afterwards begged Haydn to play on the violin—and as he had no interest in the concealment of his talent, he played admirably well an air of his own composition, which was particularly well adapted to the instrument. This time the count was very well pleased. "As for you," said he; "your place is already found. You shall be my first violin—you will suit me then exactly. But you must practice also on the *viola d'amour*; I prefer the *viola d'amour* to any instrument—I will teach you how to play it."

"Is Monsieur le Baron also well pleased with my comrade's music?" asked Consuelo of Trenck, who had again relapsed into deep thought.

"So well pleased," he answered; "that in case of my making any stay in Vienna, I will have no master but him."

"I will teach you the *viola d'amour*," said the count; "and I ask the refusal."

"I prefer the violin, and this teacher," said the baron, who, absent-minded as he was, showed a most inagnanimous sincerity;—and with the words he took up the violin and played some passages of the piece which Joseph had just given, with much purity and correct expression. Then returning the instrument, he said with unfeigned modesty—"I only played it to let you see that I am fitted only to become

your scholar; but that with attention and obedience I am capable of learning."

Consuelo asked him to play something more, and he did so at once, without any affectation. He had talent, taste, and intelligence, and Hoditz praised the composition of his piece extravagantly.

"It is not very good," said Trenck carelessly; "for it is my own. But I like it, because it pleased my princess."

The count made a hideous grimace, as if to warn Trenck of his inadvertency; but he took not the slightest notice, but buried in his own thoughts, drew the bow backward and forward over the strings for a few moments, and then rising, laid the violin on the table and, drawing his hand across his brow, strode to and fro for a minute or two, then coming up to the count, he said to him:

"I am compelled to wish you good night, my dear count; for being compelled to set out at daybreak, I ordered my carriage to be ready to take me up here at three in the morning. Since you propose to stay here all the morning, in all probability we shall not meet again till we reach Vienna. I shall be truly glad to see you again then, and to thank you for the agreeable termination of the journey, which I have made in your company. Truly and from my heart, I am devoted to you through life."

They pressed each the other's hand several times; but before he left the room the baron drew near to Joseph, and handed him some gold pieces, saying: "This is on account of the lessons which I shall ask you to give me at Vienna.—You will find me at the Prussian ambassador's." Then he gave Consuelo a little nod of the head, saying: "As for you, if I ever find you as drummer or trumpeter in my regiment, we will desert together—do you understand me?" and thereupon he left the apartment, after having bowed once again to Count Hoditz.

CHAPTER LXXIII.

So soon as the Count Hoditz found himself alone with his musicians, he felt himself more at his ease, and became very communicative. Nothing gave him more pleasure than to play the part of chapel master, or director of an opera; and he wanted Consuelo to begin her musical education without further delay. "Come hither," said he, "and sit down. We have it all to ourselves now, and no one can listen or attend who is not half a league absent from all the rest of the world.—Sit down you, also," said he to Joseph—"and take advantage of the lesson. *You* do not know how to make the smallest trill," said he again, addressing the great cantatrice. "Listen, this is the way it is done"—and he sang a very common-place passage, introducing two or three of those ornaments into it, in the vulgarest style imaginable. Consuelo amused herself by repeating the phrase, substituting a descending for an ascending trill.

"It is not so!" cried the count in a stentorian voice, slapping his hand upon the table. "You did not listen to me."

He began again; and again Consuelo sang the ornaments false, in a manner much more desperately than she had done the first time, keeping her gravity, and affecting to make the greatest efforts of at-

teation and exertion. Joseph was choking with suppressed laughter and pretended to be seized with a fit of coughing, in order to conceal it.

"La-la-la—trala—trala!" sang the count, mocking his inexpert scholar, and fidgeting on his chair with all the symptoms of a violent indignation, which he really did not feel in the slightest degree, but which he thought it necessary to assume for the support of the power, and magisterial dignity of his manner.

Consuelo made fun of him for a good quarter of an hour, and then, when she was fairly tired, sang the *trill* with all the clearness and power of which she was capable.

"Bravo! bravissimo!" cried the count, leaning back in his chair—"At last, that is perfect. I was sure I could teach it to you. Let any one bring me the first peasant I can find, and I am sure of forming him, and teaching him in a single day all that others would fail to do in a year. Once more sing that phrase, and carefully mark all the notes, but so lightly that you shall scarce seem to touch them. That is much better—that cannot be improved. We shall make something of you, I see"—and the count wiped his brow, although there was not a drop of moisture on it.

"Now," he resumed—"the cadence *with a fall and turn of the pipe!*" and he set her the example with one of those every-day abilities which the worst singers acquire, merely from hearing superior artists, in whom they admire only their *tours de force*, and to whom they think themselves fully equal—because they can imitate them in these. Consuelo again diverted herself by putting the count into one of his cold-blooded fits of affected passion which he loved to display whenever he mounted his hobby, and concluded by giving a cadence so perfect and so long drawn out, that he was forced to cry—

"Enough! enough! It is done; you have got it now. I was very sure that I should give you the key to it. Now, then, let us pass to the *roulade*. You learn with marvellous ease—I wish that I always had pupils as promising as you are."

Consuelo, who began to feel sleep and fatigue gaining upon her, greatly abridged the lesson of the *roulade*. She performed all those which the rich pedagogue prescribed to her, with perfect docility, in how bad taste they were soever; and she even allowed her fine voice to resound naturally—no longer fearing to betray herself, when she saw that the count was determined to attribute to himself alone, and his instructions, all the sudden brilliance and celestial purity which her voice displayed more and more, at each succeeding minute.

"How his voice clears up, as I show him how he ought to open his mouth and throw out his voice!" said he to Joseph, as he turned round with an air of triumph. "Distinctness in teaching, perseverance, and example, these are the three things by which singers and orators are made in a very short time. We will take another lesson to-morrow, for we have ten lessons to take, at the end of which you will know how to sing. We have the *appoggiatura*, the *flatte*, the sustained part of the voice, and the perfect part of the voice, the fall, the tender inflexion, the gay marked quaver, and the cadence in diesis, &c., &c. Now go to bed—I have ordered rooms to be prepared for you in this palace. I remain here on business until noon to-morrow; you will breakfast and follow me to Vienna. Consider yourselves from this moment as being in my service; and as a beginning, go, Joseph, and tell my valet-de-chambre to come and light me to my

room. Do you," he continued, addressing Consuelo, "stay here—I am not quite satisfied with your last roulade; pray repeat it."

But scarcely had Joseph left the room, before the count caught both Consuelo's hands with very expressive glances, and tried to draw her toward him. Interrupted in her roulade, Consuelo gazed at him in great amazement, believing that he wanted to make her beat time; but she jerked her hands away from him very abruptly, and retreated to the end of the table, as soon as she saw his sparkling eyes and meaning smile.

"What, are you going to play the prude?" said the count, resuming his indolent and haughty air. "Well, pretty one, you have got a little lover, hey? He is very ugly, poor fellow, and I hope from this day forth you will think no more about him. Your fortune is made if you do not hesitate about it, for I detest long delays. You are a lovely girl, full of cleverness and gentleness; you please me very much, and from the first moment when I set eyes on you, I saw that you were not made to ramble about the country with that little rogue. However, I will take care of him too; I will have him taken to Roswald, and charge myself with his future destinies. As for you, you shall go to Vienna; I will provide suitable lodgings for you, and what is more, if you continue prudent and modest, I will bring you out in the great world. As soon as you know something about music, you shall be the *prima donna* at my theatre, and you shall see your little chance companion, when I bring you to my residence. Do you understand me?"

"Yes, Monsieur le Comte," replied Consuelo with perfect gravity, making him a very low bow, "I understand you perfectly."

Joseph came back at that moment with the valet de chambre, carrying a flambeau in each hand. And the count made his exit, after giving Joseph a little tap on the cheek, and Consuelo a glance of intelligence.

"He is certainly a finished ass," said Joseph to his comrade, as soon as they were left alone.

"Much more finished than you can imagine," she replied very pensively.

"All one for that. He is the best man in the world, and will be of great use to me in Vienna."

"Aye! at Vienna, of as much use as you will, Beppo; but at Passau, he will not be of the least use to us in the world. I can tell you that, Joseph. Where is our baggage?"

"In the kitchen. I am going to fetch them up-stairs to our rooms, which are charming, as they tell me. You will get a good night's rest at last."

"Good, Joseph," said Consuelo shrugging up her shoulders. "Come," she resumed, "go as quick as you can, make up your package, and give up your pretty room and the good bed, in which you have been looking forward to so sweet a sleep. We leave this house this moment; do you hear me? Make haste, or they will have shut the gates."

Haydn thought he was dreaming. "Ah! indeed, very likely," said he. "I suppose these great lords are recruiters also—hey?"

"I am much more afraid of the Hoditz, than I was of the Mayer," said Consuelo impatiently. "Come, bestir yourself, do not hesitate, or I leave you, and set forth alone."

There was so much determined energy in Consuelo's face and voice

that Haydn bewildered and annoyed as he was, obeyed her in haste. He returned in less than three minutes with the knapsack containing their clothes and their music; and in three minutes more, undiscovered by any one, they had left the palace, and were away to the suburb, at the farthest end of the town.

They entered an inferior sort of inn, and hired two miserable little rooms, paying for them in advance, so that they might be able to start as early as they would, without delay.

"Will you not, at least, tell me the meaning of this new alarm?" asked Haydn, as he wished Consuelo good evening at her chamber door.

"Sleep in peace," said she, "and learn in two words that we have now nothing to fear. Monsieur Le Comte has discovered with his eagle-eye, that I am not of his sex, and has done me the honor of making me a proposal, excessively flattering to my self-esteem. Good night, my friend. We will decamp before dawn. I will knock at your door to awaken you."

On the following day, the rising sun shone on our friends as they sailed down the rapid current of the Danube with delight as pure, and hearts as lively as the waves of that noble river. They had paid their passage to an old boatman who was taking down his barque-load of manufactures to Lintz. He was a fine old man, with whom they had no fault to find, and who did not annoy them with his conversation. He did not understand a syllable of Italian, and he took no other passengers, inasmuch as his boat was already sufficiently loaded. And this at length gave them that security of mind, and repose of body, of which they stood so much in need, in order to enjoy properly the beautiful and momentarily changing scenery which this fine navigation afforded to them. The weather was lovely. There was a nice clean little hold to the boat, into which Consuelo could descend if she desired to rest her eyes from the glare of the sunlight on the waters; but she was so much inured to the open air, and the broad sunshine, that she preferred lounging among the bales on deck, deliciously occupied with watching the trees and rocks on the shore, as they appeared to glance by them. She could play and sing at her ease with Haydn, and the comical recollection of Hoditz the *melo-maniac*, or *maestro-maniac*, as Joseph styled him, added much to the gaiety of their warblings. Joseph took him off to admiration, and felt a sort of spiteful pleasure at the thought of his discomfiture. Their songs and merriment charmed and enlivened the old navigator, who was, like every German of the lower orders, passionately fond of music. He also sang them several airs, in which they discovered a certain nautical expression, which Consuelo learned of him, as well as the words; and they completely won his heart by treating him to the best at the first landing place, where they lay to, in order to take in their provisions for the day's journey; and that day was the pleasantest and the most peaceful they spent, since the beginning of their pilgrimage.

"Capital Baron de Trenck!" said Joseph, as he changed for small coins one of the brilliant pieces of gold which that noble had given him. "It is to him that I owe the ability to preserve the divine Porporina from weariness, hunger, danger, and all the ills which misery carries in its train. And yet I did not like him at first sight, that excellent and noble baron."

"I know it," said Consuelo, "you preferred the count to him. I am happy now that he limited himself to promises, and that he did not corrupt our hands by his benefits."

"After all is said," replied Haydn, "we owe him nothing. Who was it that first determined, and first had spirit enough to fight the recruiters? The baron of course. The count cared nothing about it and only did so through complaisance, and because he thought it the fashion to do so. Who was it that ran all the risks, and received a bullet through his hat, and very close to his brains? The baron again. Who was it that wounded, and perhaps killed the infamous Pistola? The baron once more. Who was it that saved the deserter, to his own cost perhaps, and at the risk of incurring the wrath of his terrible master? Last of all, who was it that respected you without pretending to recognise your sex, and both understood and appreciated the beauty of your Italian airs, and the good taste of your manner of singing?"

"Not to say the genius of Master Joseph Haydn?" added Consuelo, with a sly smile. "The baron—still the baron."

"Undoubtedly," said Haydn, paying her back for the malice of her observation; "and it is perhaps very fortunate for a noble and well-beloved absentee, of whom I have heard speak, that the declaration of love to the divine Porporina came from the ridiculous count, instead of from the brave and seductive baron."

"Beppo!" replied Consuelo, with a wan and mournful smile, "the absent are never wronged but by ungrateful and coward hearts. Therefore it is, that the baron, himself generous and sincere, who is deeply in love with his mysterious beauty, could never think of paying court to me. I ask you yourself, could you so easily sacrifice the love of your betrothed, and the faith of your heart, to a fancy for the first comer?"

Beppo sighed deeply. "A passion for you, by whomsoever nourished, could not be termed a *fancy for the first comer*," said he, "and the baron would have been perfectly excusable for forgetting all his past and present loves on seeing you."

"You are becoming quite gallant and flattering, Beppo. I see that you have profited by the society of Monsieur le Comte. But I trust that you may never marry a Margravine, and learn how love is regarded by those who marry for money."

They arrived at Lintz that night, and slept there, careless and fearless, until the morrow. So soon as Joseph was awakened, he hurried to buy shoes, linen, and several little articles of masculine attire for himself, as well as for Consuelo, who was now enabled to make herself brave and a *beau*, as Consuelo said in fine, to walk about the town and its neighborhood. The old boatman had told them that if he could get a freight for Mœlk, he would take them on board, the next day, and carry them yet twenty leagues further down the Danube. They passed that day, therefore, at Lintz, amused themselves with climbing the hill, examining the strong castles at the bottom and on the top of it, whence they could survey the majestic windings of the river, through the fertile plains of Austria. From that elevation they descried what greatly delighted them, the triumphal entry, namely, of Count Hoditz driving into the town. They recognised both the carriage and the liveries, and amused themselves by making low bows quite down to the ground, without the possibility of being seen by him. Toward evening they came down again to the shore, and found their boat laden with freight for Mœlk; whereupon they joyfully made a new bargain with their old steersman, embarked before daybreak, and saw the stars serenely burning far above their

heads, while the reflection of those stars ran in long silvery wakes over the moving mirror of the ripples. This day was not less delightful than the preceding. Joseph had but one regret, in the thought that they were hourly drawing nearer to Vienna, and that their journey, the sufferings and the sorrows of which he had all forgotten, in the memory of its last delicious instants, was drawing to its end.

At Mœlk they had to part from the brave old pilot, and that not without regret. They did not find in any of the vessels, which were in readiness to convey them farther down the stream, any which offered the same conditions of solitude and security. Consuelo felt herself entirely refreshed, recruited, and proof against all future accidents. She proposed to Joseph to resume their pedestrian habits until something new should occur. They had still twenty leagues to go, and this mode of procedure was not certainly the most rapid. The truth is, Consuelo, though she strove hard to persuade herself that she was all anxiety to resume the dress of her sex, and the proprieties of her station, was as little anxious, at the bottom of her heart, as was Joseph himself to see the end of their expedition. She was too thoroughly an artist, to the inmost nerve of her organization, not to love the liberty, the adventurous risks, the deeds of courage or address, and the constant and varied spectacle which the foot passenger alone enjoys in perfection; not to love, in a word, all the romantic activity and vicissitude of a wandering and solitary existence.

CHAPTER LXXIV.

THE first day of this, their new start, as our travellers crossed a little stream, by a wooden bridge, they saw a poor mendicant who held a little girl in her arms, and who was huddled up beside the parapet, stretching out her hand for charity to the passengers. The child was pale and suffering, the woman haggard and shivering with fever. Consuelo was deeply touched by sympathy and pity at this scene, which strongly reminded her of herself and her mother. "This is as we were once," said she to Joseph, who understood her at half a word, and who stopped with her to examine and question the mendicant.

"Alas!" said she, "it is but a few days, and I was very happy. I am a peasant, from the vicinity of Harmanitz in Bohemia. I had married, five years ago, a fine stout cousin of my own, who was the most laborious of mechanics, and the best of husbands. At the end of a year, my poor Karl, who had gone to cut wood in the mountains, suddenly disappeared, without any person being able to conjecture what had become of him. At once, I fell into the depths of poverty and of sorrow. I thought my husband had fallen from some precipice and been devoured by wolves. Although it was often in my power to marry a second time, the uncertainty of his fate, and the love which I still felt for him, did not permit me to entertain such a thought. Oh! well was I recompensed, my children. Last year, some one knocked at my door one night; I opened it, and fell on my knees at seeing my dear husband before me. But, gracious heavens! in what a condition. He looked like a phantom. He was withered,

yellow, with haggard eyes, hair stiff with icicles, feet covered with blood—those poor feet with which he had travelled, I know not how many hundreds of miles over the most hideous of roads, in the most inclement of winters. But he was so happy at again rejoining his wife, and his poor little girl, that he soon recovered his health, his good looks, and his ability to work. He told me that he had been carried off by brigands who had carried him very far, almost to the sea coast, and had sold him to the king of Prussia for a soldier. He had lived three years in that cruel servitude, at the hardest of all trades, beaten from morning until night. At length, he succeeded in escaping, in deserting, my good children. Fighting, like a desperado, against his pursuers, he had killed one, and put out the eye of another, by throwing a stone. To conclude, he had walked, day and night, concealing himself in the morasses and the woods like a wild beast; he had traversed Saxony and Bohemia, and he had escaped—he was restored to me. Ah! how happy we were during that winter, in spite of all the inclemency of the season, and the hardships of poverty. We had but one cause of anxiety, and that was the fear of seeing the birds who had caused all our misery reappear in our neighborhood; we had often thought of going to Vienna, to see the Empress, tell her the tale of our woes, obtain her protection, military service for my husband, and some means of subsistence for myself and my little girl; but I fell ill in consequence of the revulsion of feeling which I experienced on recovering my poor Karl, and we were compelled to pass the whole winter and the following summer in our mountains, always awaiting the moment when we should be able to set out, always keeping on our guard, and sleeping only with one eye closed. At length, the happy day arrived; I had become strong enough to walk, but my little girl, who was still weak, was to journey in the arms of her father. But our ill fortune awaited us on issuing from the mountains. We were walking quietly and slowly along the edge of an unfrequented road, without paying any attention to a carriage which, for the last quarter of an hour, had been slowly ascending the same steep. On a sudden the carriage stopped, and three men got out of it. ‘Are you sure it is he?’ asked one. ‘Yes,’ replied the other, who was one-eyed. ‘Upon him! upon him!’—My husband turned round and exclaimed, ‘Ah! they are Prussians. That is the fellow whose eye I knocked out. I recognise him.’—‘Fly!’ I exclaimed—‘fly—save yourself!’ He had already taken to flight, when one of the monsters flew upon me, struck me down, and set the muzzle of one pistol to my head, and another to that of my little girl. Had it not been for that fiendish idea, he would have escaped, for he ran much better than the brigands, and he had the start of them. But at the cry I uttered when I saw the pistol at my child’s head, Karl turned round, set up a loud shout to arrest the shot, and ran back as fast as he could. When the ruffian, whose foot was on my body, saw Karl within hearing, ‘Surrender,’ he cried, ‘or I kill them both. Make one step to escape, and all is over with them!’—‘I surrender—I surrender—here I am!’ cried my poor husband, and he ran back to them quicker than he had fled at the first, disregarding all my prayers that he would leave us to die. When the tigers had him in their power, they beat him till he was half dead, and covered with blood; when I advanced to assist him, they beat me too. When I saw him pinioned before my eyes, I sobbed, and filled the air with my groans, when they told me that if I did not hold silence, they would kill my child. They had

already torn it from my arms, when Karl said, 'Be silent, wife; I command you—think of our child.' I obeyed; but the agony I underwent at seeing my husband beaten, bound, and gagged before my face, while those monsters cried 'Aye! weep—weep! thou wilt never see him again, for we lead him hence to be hanged,' was so overpowering that I fell in the road as one dead, and lay all day senseless. When I opened my eyes it was night; my poor child lay on my bosom, writhing and sobbing as if its heart would break; there was no longer anything on the road but my husband's blood, and the traces of the carriage wheels which carried him off. I stopped there yet an hour or two, trying to console and reanimate Maria, who was as cold as ice, and half dead with fear. At length, when I recovered my senses, I began to consider which was the best to be done. It was clearly not to pursue the robbers, but to go and make my deposition before the magistrates of Wiesenbach, which was the nearest town. This I did; and I afterwards determined to proceed to Vienna, and cast myself at the feet of the Empress, in order that she may prevent the King of Prussia from executing sentence of death against my husband. Her Majesty can reclaim my husband as her subject, in case the recruiters cannot be overtaken. I have therefore used the small alms which I obtained in the lands of the bishopric of Passau, in getting brought so far as the Danube, in a cart, and thence I came down the river in a boat so far as Moelk, but now my resources are exhausted. The people to whom I relate my adventure are unwilling to receive it, and, in the doubt whether I am not an impostor, give me so little, that I must prosecute my journey on foot. Happy, if I arrive in five or six days, without dying of weariness; for sickness and despair are consuming me. Now, my dear children, give me some little charity, if you have the means of doing so, for I can rest no longer, but must journey onward, still onward, like the wandering Jew, until I shall obtain justice."

"Oh! my good woman!—my poor woman!" cried Consuelo, clasping her in her arms, and weeping tears of joy and compassion. "Courage! courage! Have good hopes, and be of heart. Your husband is free. He is now galloping toward Vienna, on a good horse, with a well filled purse in his pocket."

"What say you!" cried the deserter's wife, whose eyes were suffused with tears, while her lips quivered convulsively, so that she could hardly speak. "You know him! You have seen him! Oh! my God! Great God! God of goodness!"

"Alas! what are you doing?" said Joseph to Consuelo,—*"suppose you are giving her but a false joy. Suppose the deserter, whom we assisted in saving, is not her husband?"*

"It is he, Joseph. I tell you it is he. Think of the one-eyed man—think of Pistola's manner of proceeding. Remember how the deserter said he was a father of a family, and an Austrian subject; but it is very easy to be satisfied. How does your husband look?"

"Red-haired, gray-eyed, large-faced, five feet eight inches high; his nose a little flattened—his forehead low—a superb man."

"That resembles him certainly," said Consuelo. "And how was he dressed?"

"An old green cassock, worn breeches, and gray stockings."

"That corresponds also; and the recruiters, did you pay any attention to them?"

"Did I not pay attention!—Holy Virgin! Their horrible faces

will never be effaced from my memory.' And then the poor woman accurately described Pistola, the silent man, and him with the one eye. "There is yet one other," said the poor woman—"the fourth, who remained near the horse, and took no part in what was passing. He had a coarse, indifferent face, which seemed to me even more cruel than that of the others; for, while I was shrieking, and they were beating my husband, and binding him with cords, like an assassin, the fat fellow sat there humming, and mimicking the trumpet with his mouth: 'Broum—broum—broum—broum!' Ah! what a heart of steel!"

"Well! that was Mayer," said Consuelo to Joseph. "Can you doubt any longer; he has a trick of humming continually, and of playing the trumpet thus."

"It is true," said Joseph. "It was then Karl whom we saw delivered. Thanks be to Heaven!"

"Yes, thanks to kind Heaven, above all," cried the poor woman, casting herself on her knees, "and you, too, Maria, do you, too, kiss the earth with me, to thank the guardian angels and the Holy Virgin. Your father is found again, and we shall soon rejoin him."

"Tell me, my good woman, is it a custom with Karl to kiss the earth when he is very happy?"

"Yes, my child; he never fails to do so. When he came back to us after deserting, he would not enter the house, until he had kissed the door-sill."

"Is that a custom of your country?"

"No; it is a custom of his own, which he has taught us, and which has always stood us instead."

"It was he then certainly whom we saw," resumed Consuelo, "for we saw him kiss the earth to thank those who had delivered him. Did you not observe it, Beppo?"

"Perfectly. It was he. There cannot now be a doubt of it."

"Come, let me clasp you to my heart," cried Carl's wife. "Oh! you two; you are angels of paradise, to bring me such news. But tell me how it fell out?"

Joseph told her all that had happened, and, when the woman had exhausted her gratitude in prayers to Heaven for the welfare of Joseph and Consuelo, whom she very naturally regarded as the first liberators of her husband, she asked what she had better do to recover him.

"I think you had better go to Vienna. You will find him there, if you do not overtake him on the way. Should you get there the first, be sure that you inform the officers of the administration where you live, in order that Karl may be informed the moment he presents himself there."

"Ah! me! what officers?—what administration? I know nothing of their habits. I shall be lost in so large a city, poor peasant that I am."

"Hold!" said Joseph. "We have never had any business by which we can know how such things are to be managed; but ask the first person you see to direct you to the Prussian embassy. Ask them for Monsieur le Baron de—"

"Take care what you are about, Beppo," said Consuelo in a whisper to Joseph, in order to prevent him from compromising the baron, in reference to that adventure.

"Well Count Hoditz, then," said Joseph. "Yes, the count. He

will do for vanity what the other would have done from good feeling. Enquire for the house of the Margravine, Princess of Bareith, and give her husband the note which I will hand to you."

And with the word, she tore a white leaf out of Joseph's blank book, and wrote the following words in pencil:—"Consuelo Porporina, prima donna of the theatre of San Samael at Venice, ex-signor Bertoni, wandering singer at Passau, recommends to the noble heart of the Count Hoditz Roswald, the wife of Karl the deserter, whom his lordship saved from the hands of the recruiters and loaded with favors. La Porporina promises herself the pleasure of thanking Monsieur le Comte for his protection, in the presence of Madam the Margravine, if Monsieur the Comte will permit her the honor of singing in the private apartments of her highness." Consuelo signed it carefully and looked at Joseph, who, understanding her at a glance pulled out his purse. Without farther consultation, and by a spontaneous impulse, they then gave the poor woman the two pieces of gold which remained to them of Trenck's present, in order that she might travel in a carriage, and walked with her to the nearest village, at which they helped her to make her bargain with a cheap carriage driver. Then, having procured her something to eat, and some few articles of clothing at the expense of the rest of their little fortune, they saw the happy creature, who had received life as it were at her hands, embarked on her journey.

Consuelo then asked with a smile, how much was left at the bottom of the purse.

Joseph took up the violin, shook it beside his ear, and replied, "Nothing but sound."

Consuelo tried her voice in the open country, executed a brilliant roulade, and then exclaimed—"there is plenty of sound left." Then she joyously took the hand of her companion, gave it an affectionate squeeze, and said—"You are a brave lad, Beppo."

"And so are you," replied Beppo, bursting into a loud fit of laughter after he had wiped away a tear.

CHAPTER LXXV.

It is not very alarming to fall short of money, when one is nearly at the end of a journey; but had they been much farther distant from it, our young artists would not have felt less gay than they now did on finding themselves all but safely landed. One has found himself in a foreign country destitute of resources; for Joseph was almost as much of a stranger as Consuelo at that distance from Vienna, to know what marvellous security, what enterprising and inventive genius are revealed to the artist, who has thus spent his last penny. Up to that very moment, it is a sort of agony—a continual dread of falling short—a black apprehension of sufferings, of embarrassments and humiliations, which vanish as soon as the chink of the last piece of money is heard. Then to poetic minds, a new world commences—a holy confidence in the charity of others, full of charming illusions, mingled with a disposition to labor, and a willingness to be satisfied, which easily triumph over all obstacles.

"It is Sunday to-day," said Consuelo to Joseph, "you must play dances in the first village we come to. We shall not pass through two streets ere we shall find plenty of people who will wish to dance, and will gladly hire us as their minstrels. Do you know how to make a pipe? If you do, I shall easily learn to make some use of it, and provided I can draw a few single sounds from it, that will suffice for an accompaniment to you."

"Do I know how to make a pipe?" cried Joseph, "You shall soon see that."

They soon found on the river's edge a reed very fit from which to make a pipe; it was skillfully pierced, and sounded admirably. The key note was successfully pitched, a rehearsal followed, and our young folk proceeded very quietly to a little hamlet at about three miles distant, which they entered joyously to the sound of their instruments, crying at every door—"Who will dance, who will dance?" Here are the instruments; the ball is about to begin."

They soon came to a little square planted with fine trees, to which they were escorted by about forty children, marching in time to the music, clapping their hands, and shouting.

Ere long two or three merry couples came, and set the dust flying as they opened the ball; and, before the ground was fairly beaten the whole rustic population made a circle round this rustic ball, got up without premeditation and without conditions. At the conclusion of the first waltzes, Joseph put his violin under his arm, and Consuelo climbing up on her chair, addressed them in a little speech, informing them that when artists were hungry, their fingers were always stiff, and they were themselves short-winded. Five minutes afterward, bread, milk, cakes and ale, were brought to them in abundance. As to salary, they very soon came to an understanding, a collection was to be made, at which each person should give what he pleased.

When they had done eating, they mounted again on a barrel, which was rolled triumphantly into the middle of the circle, and the dancing recommenced; but at the expiration of about a couple of hours, they were interrupted by some news which appeared to set the whole place in a stir, and which, passing from mouth to mouth, at last reached the minstrels. The village shoemaker, in finishing a pair of shoes in a great hurry, had pricked his thumb badly with his awl.

"It is a serious event—a great misfortune," said an old man who was leaning against the barrel on which they were standing. "It is Gottlieb, the shoemaker, who is our village organist, and to-morrow is our patron saint's day. Oh! what a holiday! There is nothing like it within ten leagues round. Our mass, above all, is a wonder, and people come to hear it from great distances. Gottlieb is a real chapel master. He is the organist, he makes the children sing, he sings himself; in a word, what does he not do, especially on our holiday? And what will M. le Canon say? M. le Canon of St. Stephen's, who is himself the officiating minister at the high mass, and who is always so well pleased with our music? He is passionately fond of music, is the good canon; and it is a matter of great pride with us to see him at our altar, since we scarcely belong of right to his benefice, and it gives him not a little trouble to be present with us, which he does not like without good reason."

"Well," said Consuelo, "all that can be managed: my comrade and I together will take charge of the organ, of the singing-school, of the mass, in a word; and if Monsieur the Canon is not satisfied with us we will take nothing for our trouble."

"Very fine. very fine!" said the old man. "You talk about it quite at your ease, young man; but our mass is not played with a violin and a flute. No, indeed, it is a very different affair, and you are not acquainted with our partitions."

"We will make ourselves acquainted with them this very evening," said Joseph with an assumption of superiority, which was not without its influence on the auditors, who were grouped around him."

"Let us see," said Consuelo. "Take us to the church, let some one blow the organ, and if we do not play it to your satisfaction, you can always refuse your assistance."

"But the partitions, which is the master-piece of Gottlieb's arrangements?"

"We will call upon Gottlieb, and if he do not declare him satisfied with us, we give up all our pretensions. Besides, a wounded finger will not prevent Gottlieb from marshalling his choir, and singing his own part."

The village patriarchs, who had collected around them, now held council, and resolved on trying the experiment. The ball was abandoned; the canon's mass was a very different sort of affair from a dance.

Haydn and Consuelo, after successfully trying their hands at the organ, and singing both solos and duets, were admitted to be very tolerable musicians, in the absence of better. Some mechanics indeed were bold enough to say that their execution was superior to Gottlieb's; and that the fragments of Scarlatti, of Pergolese and Bach, which they rehearsed, were equal at least to the music of Holzbaüer, which Gottlieb adhered to exclusively. The curate, who had come to listen, went so far as to assert that the canon would greatly prefer this music to that with which he was ordinarily regaled. The sacristan, who did not agree, shook his head gloomily; and the curate, in order to avoid giving offence to his parishioners, consented that these two *virtuosi*, who seemed to have been sent by Providence to their aid, should come to some agreement with Gottlieb to play the accompaniment to the mass.

They went in crowds to the house of the shoemaker, who showed them his hand so badly swollen that no one could imagine him capable of performing his functions of organist. The impossibility was far more real than he could have desired. Gottlieb was endowed with a certain degree of musical intelligence, and played tolerably well on the organ; but spoiled by the praises of his townsmen, and the half-mocking approbation of the canon, over-estimated most absurdly both his powers of execution and direction. He would have been willing that the holiday should have been a total failure, and that the patron saint's mass should be deprived of music, rather than that his own place should be filled by two wandering players. Nevertheless he was compelled to yield, and pretended to search for the *partition*, but he was so long about it, that the curate threatened to give the whole management into the hands of the two young artists, before he could be induced to find it.

Consuelo and Joseph had then to prove their science by reading at sight the passages which passed for the most difficult of that one of Holzbaüer's six and twenty masses which was to be performed on the morrow. That music, lacking both originality and genius, was at best well-written and easy to catch, especially by Consuelo, who had mastered many more difficult trials. The auditors were wonder-struck; and

Gottlieb, who grew every moment more morose and sullen, declared that he had a fever, and that he should go to bed, being perfectly charmed that every one was satisfied.

The voices and instruments were therefore immediately collected in the church, and our two little *extempore* chapel-masters at once directed the rehearsal. All went well. The brewer, the weaver, the schoolmaster, and the baker of the village, played the four violins. The choirs consisted of the children with their parents, good peasants or mechanics, cool-witted, full of attention, and eager to proceed. Joseph had already heard Holzbauer's music at Menna, where it was all the rage, and easily mastered it; and Consuelo, taking her part alternately in the parts, led the choir so well, that the artists surpassed themselves. There were two solos, however, which were to be sung by a nephew and a niece of Gottlieb's, his two favorite pupils, and the best singers in the parish; but these two artists did not make their appearance, on the pretext that they were perfect in their parts, and needed no rehearsal.

Joseph and Consuelo supped at the house of the curate, where an apartment had been prepared for them. The worthy curate was delighted, and evidently showed how much he looked forward to the excellence of the mass for to-morrow, and to the gratification of Monsieur le Canon.

On the following day the whole village was in a bustle long before daybreak. The bells rang loud and long. The roads were full of faithful worshippers hurrying from the surrounding country to share in the solemnities of the occasion. The canon's carriage drew near majestically slow. The church was dressed up in all its best ornaments. Consuelo was much amused by the self-importance of every person she saw. For indeed there was almost as much vanity and self-esteem here as in the side-scenes of a theatre, except that things passed more simply, with more of laughter, and less of indignation.

Half-an-hour before the mass, the sacristan came up, frightened half out of his wits, and revealed to them a base plot which they had discovered, the planning of the jealous and perfidious Gottlieb. Having learned that the rehearsal had been excellent, and that all the musical force of the parish were enchanted with the new comers, he now pretended to be very sick, and forbade his nephew and niece from leaving the head of his bed; so that they should neither have Gottlieb's presence, which the people fancied indispensable to the arrangement of the whole, nor the solos, which were the finest part of the mass. All the performers were disconcerted, and it was with great pains that the important sacristan, who believed himself a great judge, succeeded in gathering them in the church to council. Consuelo and Joseph hurried to meet them, made them go over again all the difficult parts, encouraged those who were the weakest, and inspired all with confidence and energy. As to the solos, they soon agreed to undertake them in person. Consuelo, on reflection, easily remembered a religious piece of Porpora's which was perfectly adapted to the tone and words of the solo required. She hastily wrote it out on her knee, and rehearsed it with Haydn, who was soon ready to accompany her. She then thought of a fragment of Sebastian Bach, which he already knew, and which they arranged as well as they could for the occasion between themselves.

The bells rang for the mass while they were yet rehearsing, and they came to a perfect harmony in spite of the din of the great bell.

When Monsieur the Canon made his appearance at the altar, the choir was all in full swing and was running through the figures of the German composer with a steadiness and unison which gave great promise. Consuelo felt a real pleasure in observing the good German proletaries, with serious faces, their correct voices, their methodical manner, and their powers never failing, because never pressed beyond a certain limit. "Those," said she to Joseph, "are exactly the musicians suited to music such as this. If the performers possessed the fire which the master lacked, all would go wrong; but they have it not; and pieces mechanically composed are the best rendered when mechanically rendered. Why have not we the illustrious maestro Hoditz-Roswald here, to drill these machines? He would worry himself vastly, do no good, and be the happiest man on earth."

The solo for the male voice disturbed these good people very greatly, but Joseph acquitted himself wonderfully well; but when Consuelo's turn arrived, her Italian manner first astonished them, then scandalised them not a little, and at last filled them with enthusiasm. The cantatrice took pains to sing her best, and the large and sublime expression of her song transported Joseph to the seventh heaven.

"I cannot believe," said he "that you ever sang better than you did to-day for this poor village mass."

"At all events I never sang with more pleasure to myself. This audience is much more agreeable to my sympathies than that of the theatre. Now let me look at the pulpit and see if Monsieur the Canon is well pleased. Yes! he looks perfectly happy, the worthy canon, and by the way in which every one looks to his features to find his reward, assures me that the only ONE of whom no person thinks here, is He whom all ought to adore."

"Except you, Consuelo! Divine faith and love alone are capable of inspiring accents like yours."

When the two artists came out of church little was wanted to make the people carry them in triumph to the curate's house, where an excellent breakfast was in readiness for them. The curate presented them to the canon, who loaded them with praises, and expressed a desire to hear Porpora's solo again, after luncheon. But Consuelo, who was astonished that her female voice had not been discovered, and who dreaded the canon's eye, excused herself on the pretext that her rehearsals, and the active part she had taken in all the exercises, had greatly tired her. But the excuse was not accepted, and they were obliged to appear at the canon's breakfast. The canon was a man of fifty, of a handsome and pleasing countenance, although a little inclined to fat. His manners were distinguished, even noble; nor was he slow to tell every one in confidence, that he had royal blood in his veins, being one of the four hundred natural children of Augustus II. Elector of Saxony and King of Poland.

He showed himself affable and gracious, as a man of the world and a high ecclesiastic should be, and Joseph remarked by his side a layman whom he treated at once with distinction and familiarity, and whom Haydn remembered to have seen in Vienna, though he could not fit his face with his name.

"Well, my good boys," said the canon, "and so you refuse me a second hearing of that theme of Porpora's. Here, however, is a friend of mine, much more a musician and a hundred times a better judge of music than I, who was very much struck with your perform-

ance. Since you are tired," he added, turning to Joseph, "I will not torment you any farther; but you must be so kind as to tell me your name, and where you have learned music."

Joseph knew at once that Consuelo's solo was attributed to him, and as an expressive glance from her made him understand that she wished him to confirm the canon in his mistake, he replied shortly, "My name is Joseph, and I studied at the music-school of St. Stephen's."

"So did I," said the stranger. "I studied at the music school under Reuter, the father—you, I presume, under the son."

"Yes, monsieur."

"But you have had subsequent lessons; you have studied in Italy, have you not?"

"No, monsieur."

"Was it you who played the organ?"

"Sometimes I—sometimes my companion!"

"And who sang?"

"Both of us."

"Well, but that theme of Porpora's. It is not you who sang that?" said the stranger, looking sideways at Consuelo.

"Bah! it is not that child," said the canon, also looking at Consuelo. "He is too young to know how to sing so well."

"Of course it is not I—it is he"—she replied abruptly, pointing to Joseph. She was anxious to get rid of these questions, and looked impatiently toward the door.

"Why do you tell a falsehood, my child?" said the curate simply. "I heard you sing yesterday, and saw you too; and I recognised your companion's organ in the solo of Bach."

"No, no! you must be mistaken, Monsieur Curate," resumed the stranger, with a shrewd smile, "or else the young man must be extraordinarily modest. At all events, we must give them high praises, the one and the other."

Then drawing the curate aside, "You have a true ear," he said, "but you have not a penetrating eye. It does honor to the purity of your character. But still you must be undeceived. That little Hungarian peasant is an exceedingly able Italian singing girl."

"A woman disguised!" cried the curate in astonishment. He looked attentively at Consuelo, who was engaged in replying to the good-humored questions of the canon, and whether it was shame, pleasure, or indignation, he blushed crimson from his skull-cap to his bands.

"It is as I tell you," replied the stranger; "I am trying to think who she can possibly be; I do not know her; and as to her disguise and the humble position in which she now is, I can only attribute them to some freak. It must be a love affair, Monsieur Curate, which is no business of ours."

"Ah! a love affair, indeed! very well, indeed, as you say," cried the curate becoming very animated; an abduction, a criminal intrigue with this young man. All this, however, is very atrocious! and I who fell into the trap! I who lodged them in my curacy! Luckily, I gave them separate rooms, and I trust there has been no scandal in my house. What an adventure; and how the free thinkers of my parish—and there are two or three such, I assure you—would laugh at my expense if they knew it."

"If none of your parishioners knew that she was a woman by her

voice. It is very little probable that I have recognised her by her features or deportment. Look, however, what pretty hands she has, what silky hair, what a small foot, in spite of her coarse shoes."

"I will not look at anything of the kind," cried the curate, quite beside himself. "It is an abomination to dress herself as a man. There is a verse in the Holy Bible which condemns to death any man or woman guilty of assuming the dress of the opposite sex. *To death!* Do you hear, monsieur? That shows clearly the enormity of the sin! with that too, she has presumed to enter the church, and impudently dared to sing the praises of the Lord, her soul and body stained alike by the commission of such a crime."

"And most divinely she did sing them; the tears came into my eyes as I listened, for I never heard anything like it in my life. Strange mystery! Who can this woman be? All those of whom I can think are much older than she."

"She is a mere child—quite a young girl," cried the curate, who could not help looking at Consuelo with a feeling of interest which conflicted in his heart with the austerity of his principles. "Oh! the little serpent! See with how gentle and modest an air she replies to the questions of M. le Canon. Ah, I am a lost man, if any one here should ever discover the deceit. I should have to leave the country."

"What! did neither you yourself, nor any one of your parishioners, even suspect that her voice was a woman's? Of a truth, you must be a very simple audience."

"What would you have? We certainly perceived something very extraordinary in the voice, but Gottlieb said that it was an Italian voice, that he had already heard several others like it, that it was a voice of the Sistine Chapel—I don't know what that means, and I was a thousand miles from suspecting any thing. What must I do, monsieur? What must I do?"

"If no one has any suspicion, my advice to you is to say nothing at all about it. Get rid of the boys as quickly as you can. I will arrange to get rid of them for you if you wish it."

"Oh! yes. You will do me the greatest service; see here, I will give you the money—how much ought I to pay them?"

"This is not my part of the business. We pay artists liberally; but your parish is not rich, and the church is not forced to do as the theatre does."

"I will do things liberally. I will give them six florins. I will go and get it at once. But what will Monsieur the Canon say. He does not seem to have perceived anything as yet. See how paternally he is talking with *her*; the holy man."

"Frankly! do you believe that he would be much scandalized?"

"How should he fail to be so? However, it is not so much his reprimands as his raillery that I fear. You know how fond he is of a joke. He has so much wit—oh, how he will mock my simplicity."

"But if he partakes in your error, as he seems to do so far, he will have no right to quiz you. Come, do not seem to take any notice; let us join them, and you can take your own time to get rid of your musicians."

They quitted the embrasure of the window in which they had been thus conversing, and the curate gliding alongside of Joseph—who did not appear to engross the canon nearly so much as the Signor Bertoni—slipped the six florins into his hand. So soon as he had received that moderate sum, Joseph made a sign to Consuelo to get rid

of the canon and to follow him out; but the canon called Joseph back, and persisting in the belief that it was he who had the female voice, asked him, "Why, I pray you, did you choose that piece of Porpora's music, instead of singing M. Holzbaüer's?"

"We had not Holzbaüer's, and did not know it," replied Joseph. "I sang the only thing which I had studied, that remained complete in my memory."

The curate then hastily related Gottlieb's trick, and that bit of artistic jealousy made the canon laugh heartily.

"Well!" said the stranger, "your good shoemaker did us a great service. Instead of a very bad solo, we had a masterpiece of a very great maestro. You showed your taste," he added, addressing himself to Consuelo.

"I do not think," said Joseph, "that Holzbaüer's solo can be bad. What we sang of his was not without merit."

"Merit is not genius," replied the stranger with a sigh, and then pertinaciously addressing himself to Consuelo, he added, "What do you think of it, my young friend? Do you think they are the same?"

"No, monsieur, I do not," answered she, coldly and laconically, for the look of the man embarrassed and annoyed her more and more every moment."

"But you felt pleasure in singing that mass by Holzbaüer, did you not?" asked the canon. "It is fine; do you not think so?"

"I felt neither pleasure nor the reverse," said Consuelo, who was so impatient that she was becoming most positively frank.

"That is to say, it is neither good nor bad," said the stranger laughing. "Well! my lad, you have answered me very well, and my opinion agrees with yours."

The canon burst into a violent fit of laughter, the curate appeared to be very greatly embarrassed, and Consuelo following Joseph, made her escape without troubling her head about that musical difference.

"Well! Monsieur Canon," said the stranger, as soon as the musicians had got out of the room, "what do you think of those lads?"

"Charming! admirable! I beg your pardon for saying so, after the rub the younger one gave you just before leaving the room."

"My pardon? I think him adorable, that boy. What talents for such tender years. It is wonderful! what powerful and precocious natural temperaments these Italians have."

"I can say nothing for the talents of him you speak of," said the canon quite naturally. "I did not clearly observe it. It is his companion whom I think really wonderful, and he belongs to our nation, if it may so please your Italian mania."

"Oh! yes," said the stranger, winking his eye at the curate. "Then it was decidedly the elder who sang us Porpora's music."

"I presume so," said the curate, a good deal put out at being compelled to vouch for such a falsehood.

"For me, I am sure of it," said the canon, "for he told me so himself."

"And your other solo," said the stranger, "that must then have been one of your parishioners who sang that?"

"I suppose so," answered the curate, forcing himself to uphold the imposture.

Both looked at the canon to see whether he was their dupe, or whether he was laughing at them in his sleeve. But he did not seem

to entertain such a thought. His tranquillity reassured the curate, and they began to speak of other things. But at the end of a quarter of an hour, the canon returned to the subject of music, and wanted to see Joseph and Consuelo, in order, as he said, to take them to his country seat, and hear them at his leisure. The curate lost his head, and stammered out incomprehensible excuses. The canon then asked him if he had his little musicians put into the pot to make up the breakfast, which he really thought was quite good enough without. The curate was in agony. The stranger came to the rescue. "I will seek them out for you," he said, making a sign to the curate that he would devise some expedient or other. But he had not the trouble to do so, for he instantly learned from the servant woman that the young artists had set off across the fields, after generously giving her one of the florins which they had received.

"What, gone!" exclaimed the canon greatly dissatisfied. "I must send after them. I must see them again. I must hear them—absolutely I must!"

They affected to obey him, but they took no particular pains to overtake them. Beside which, they had taken their line as straight as the crow flies, eager to evade the curiosity which threatened them with embarrassment. The canon regretted the misunderstanding much, and was a little out of sorts at it.

"Heaven be thanked! he thinks nothing of the truth," said the curate to the stranger.

"Curate," replied he, "do you remember the story of a certain bishop, who, eating meat by mistake, one Friday, was informed of his inadvertency by his vicar. 'Wretch!' cried the bishop, 'could he not have held his peace, till dinner was over.' We might just as well have allowed Monsieur le Canon go on deceiving himself to his heart's content."

CHAPTER LXXVI.

THE night was tranquil and serene; the full moon shone through the lustrous atmosphere, and nine o'clock in the evening was striking on the clear sonorous bell of an antique priory, when Joseph and Consuelo having vainly endeavored to find a bell at the gate of the enclosure, walked round and round that silent habitation, in the hope of making themselves heard by some hospitable ear. But it was all in vain. All the gates were locked, not a dog barked, not a light was to be seen at the windows of this lifeless abode.

"This must be the palace of silence," said Haydn, laughing, "and had not the clock twice repeated in its slow and solemn voice the four quarters in *ut* and in *si*, and the nine strokes for the hour in *sol*, I should believe the place abandoned to ghosts and night owls."

"The country around," said Consuelo, "seems an absolute desert;" for she was very tired, and this mysterious convent had something of attraction for her poetical imagination. "Even if we must sleep in some chapel, I will go no further; let us try to enter at all hazards, even if it be over this wall, which does not look very difficult to climb."

"Come" said Joseph, "I will give you my hands, on which to set

your foot as you climb, and when once you are on the top, I will throw myself over quickly, and help you down."

No sooner said than done; the wall was a low one, and two minutes afterward, our young trespassers were walking with audacious tranquillity within the sacred demesnes. It was a fine kitchen-garden kept up with minute pains. The fruit trees, trained into the form of fans on their espaliers, offered to every comer their long arms loaded with red-cheeked apples, and golden pears. Arbors of vines, festooned on arches, bore, suspended like so many chandeliers, heavy branches of rich grapes. The great beds of vegetables did not lack, either, their own peculiar beauty. Asparagus with its graceful stalks and silky foliage, all sparkling with the evening dew drops, resembled a forest of Lilliputian pines covered with a gauze of silver. Peas climbed in light garlands up their rods, and formed long cradled alleys, among which the little hedge-sparrows, not as yet well asleep, chirruped in low murmurs. Gourds, proud leviathans of this wavy sea of verdure, displayed their great golden orbs among their large dark leaves. Young artichokes, like so many little crowded heads, arranged themselves around the principal individual, the centre of the royal stock; melons reposed beneath their bell glasses, like ponderous Chinese mandarins beneath their umbrellas; and from each of these glass domes, the reflection of the moon darted forth like the rays of a great blue diamond, against which the blundering moths persisted in knocking their heads with a ceaseless humming.

A hedge of rose-bushes formed the line of demarcation, between the kitchen-garden and the flower-garden, which touched the buildings, and surrounded them with a girdle of flowers. This garden was reserved like a sort of elysium. Fine ornamental shrubs, overshadowed plants of rare beauty and exquisite fragrance. The sand of the walks was as soft to the feet as a carpet; one would have said that the turf plats had been combed blade by blade, so regular and even was the sod. The flowers stood so close that the earth could not be seen, and each round flower-bed resembled a large basket.

The priory was a little building of the twelfth century, once fortified with battlements, which were now replaced by steep roofs of gray slate, the towers on which the machicolles and bastizans had been suffered to remain as ornaments, to give it a striking character, while great masses of ivy broke the monotony of the walls, on the unclothed portions of which, coldly shining in the moonlight, the gray and uncertain shadows of the young poplars wavered as the night-wind shook them. Great wreaths of vine, to conclude the picture, mantled the cornices of all the doors and windows.

"This dwelling is calm and melancholy," said Consuelo. "But it does not inspire me with so much sympathy as the garden. Plants are made to vegetate in their places, and men to move and live in society. Were I a flower I should desire to grow in this garden, it is the place for flowers; but being a woman, I should not desire to live in a cell, and to shut myself up alive in a mass of gray stones. Should you like to be a monk, Beppo?"

"Not I, God keep me from it! But I should wish to live beyond the care of considering my daily food and lodging. I should desire to live a peaceful and retired life, somewhat at my ease, never distracted by poverty or want. In a word, I should desire to vegetate as it were in a sort of passive regularity, even in a dependent state, provided my intelligence were left free, and that I had no other care or duty than to compose music."

"Were it so, friend, you would compose tranquil music in consequence of composing it tranquilly."

"And wherefore should it be bad on that account? What is more beautiful than calmness? The skies are calm, the moon is calm, those flowers, whose peaceful attitudes you love."

"Their motionless quiet touches me only because it succeeds to the undulations which they borrow from the breeze. The purity of the sky would not charm us had we never seen it blurred by the storm. The moon is never more glorious than when she wades in light through angry clouds. Can rest, except to the weary, bring any real happiness? Can that be even called rest, which is eternal? No. It is annihilation, it is death. Ah! had you inhabited, as I have done, the Giants' castle, for months in succession, you would be well assured that tranquillity is not life."

"But what do you call tranquil music?"

"Music which is too correct, and too cold. Beware of composing such, if you would avoid fatigue, and the cares of the world."

As they spoke thus, they had arrived at the base of the walls of the priory. A fountain of clear water spouted out of a marble globe surmounted by a gilded cross, and fell down from bowl to bowl, until at last it reached a large granite shell in which a quantity of gold-fish played. Consuelo and Beppo, who were scarcely more than children themselves, were diverted at watching their motions, when they saw a tall white figure, appearing with a pitcher in her hand, at whose appearance they were at first somewhat alarmed; but as soon as she discovered our intruders, which she did not, being very near-sighted, until she had nearly filled her pitcher, she dropped it, and took to her heels, screaming at the top of her lungs, and invoking the Holy Virgin and all the saints.

"What is the matter now, dame Bridget?" cried a man's voice from the interior of the house. "Have you met an evil spirit?"

"Two devils, or rather two thieves, are standing by the fountain," replied dame Bridget, joining the questioner, who showed himself on the sill of the door, and stood there a few minutes, uncertain and incredulous.

"This will be another of your panics! Is it likely that thieves should come to attack us at such an hour as this?"

"I swear to you," she replied, "that there are two black figures by the fountain yonder, as motionless as stones. See, you can make them out from here."

"I believe I do see something," cried the man, attempting to talk big. "I will call for the gardener and his two big lads, who will soon take order with these fellows. They must have climbed the walls, for I shut all the doors myself."

"In the mean time let us shut this," said the old woman; "and then we will ring the alarm."

The door closed, and the young travellers stood doubting what they should do. To fly was to confirm the ill opinion already formed of them. To remain, was to await a violent attack. While they were yet consulting, a ray of light streamed through the chink of a shutter in the upper story. It became larger; a crimson curtain, behind which the lamp was burning, was gently lifted, and a hand which showed itself white and dimpled in the clear moonlight was seen at the window, lifting the fringes of the curtain, while probably an unseen eye was scrutinizing their every movement from within.

"All that we can do," said Consuelo to her companion, "is to sing. Allow me,—leave the words to me. No. Rather take your violin and play me any ritornella you please in the first key that occurs to you."

Joseph obeyed, and Consuelo began to sing, improvising both the words and the poetry, a sort of rhythmic chaunt in German, divided by passages of recitation.

"We are but two young children innocent,
As small, as weak, as tuneful as the bird
We imitate, the lovelorn nightingale."

"Now Joseph," she whispered aside, "a harmony to support the recitative." Then she resumed:—

"Worn by fatigue, dismayed by solitude
Of silent night, this dwelling we deserted,
At distance empty seeming; and presumed
With timid feet its anxious wall to scale."

"A harmony in *la* minor, Joseph,"—

Then in a magic paradise we stood,
Full of rare fruits, boon earth's delicious gift;
Hungered, athirst, if but one smallest fruit
Be missed i' the espallier, one grape i' the bunch,
Let us be hunted hence, with shame and scorn."

"A modulation to return in *ut* major, Joseph,"—

"And now they threaten us, and now suspect,
Yet will we not escape, nor yet will hide,
As who have done no wrong, unless to climb
The walls of the Lord's house be wrong.
Yet, when the question is, how paradise
To scale, all roads are good, the shortest best."

Consuelo concluded her recitative by one of those pretty canticles in vulgar Latin, which is called in Venice *Latino de frate*, and which the people sing at night before the Madonna. When she had finished, the two white hands which had gradually advanced during the singing applauded eagerly, and a voice, which did not sound entirely strange to her ear, cried from the window—"Welcome, disciples of the muses, enter, enter. Hospitality invites and awaits you."

The young people drew nigh, and a moment afterward a servant, in a red and violet livery, opened the door to them civilly. "I took you for robbers, my young friends, and I beg your pardon for it," he said laughing; "but it is your own fault. Why did you not sing before? With such a passport as your violin and your voice, you could not fail of a good reception from my master. Come; it appears he is acquainted with you before."

As he spoke thus, the civil servant had ascended a dozen steps of very easy stairs before them, all covered with a soft Turkey carpet. Before Joseph had time to ask his master's name, he had opened the two leaves of a folding door, which closed noiselessly behind them, and, after having crossed a comfortable antechamber, introduced them into a drawing-room where the gracious owner of this happy abode, seated opposite to a fine roast pheasant, between two bottles of old golden wine, was already beginning to digest his first course even while he

was paternally and majestically attacking the second. On his return from his morning walk he had committed himself to the hands of his valet to restore his complexion. He had been shaved and powdered anew. The slightly gray curls of his fine head were daintily rounded and besprinkled with a shade of exquisitely scented powder. His well-shaped hands rested on his knees, clad in black satin breeches with gold buckles. His well-turned leg, of which he was a little vain, decorated with a pair of very transparent violet stockings, well pulled up, rested on a velvet cushion, and his noble corporation, enveloped in an excellent doublet of pure-colored silk, wadded and stitched, reclined deliciously in a great tapestry arm-chair, where no part of the elbow saw the slightest risk of encountering an angle, so well was it stuffed and rounded on every side. Seated near the chimney, which blazed and crackled, behind her master's arm-chair, dame Bridget, the house-keeper, was preparing his coffee with a sort of religious care, while a second valet—not less perfect in his dress, or less courteous in his manners than the other—was delicately detaching one of the pheasant's wings, which the holy man awaited, without either impatience or anxiety.

Consuelo and Joseph bowed deeply, as they recognised in the person of their benevolent host, monsieur, the major canon, and jubiliary of the cathedral chapel of St. Stephen, before whom they had sung the mass on the previous day.

CHAPTER LXXVII.

MONSIEUR the Canon was a man as comfortably situated as any one in the world could be. At the age of seven years, thanks to royal protection which had not failed him, he had been declared at the age of reason, agreeably to the canons of the church, which, admit that although one have not much reason at that age, he has at least enough to receive and enjoy the fruits of a benefice. In consequence of this decision, the young priest was admitted to the dignity of canon, although the natural son of a king.—Still, in accordance with the canons of the church—which always presumptively accept the legitimacy of a child presented to a benefice under the protection of royalty; although other articles of the same canons insist that all pretenders to the holding of ecclesiastical benefices must be the issue of good and lawful marriages, in default of which they may be declared *incapable*, not to say *unworthy*, and *infamous*, as might be done upon occasion.

A man of intellect, a good orator, an elegant writer, the canon had promised and still promised himself that he would write a book on the rights, privileges, and immunities of his chapter. Surrounded by dusty quartos which he had never opened, he had not made his own book, he was not making it, he was never likely to make it. The two secretaries who had been engaged at the expense of the chapter to assist him, had no occupation but to perfume his person and prepare his table. Much interest followed his book—it was expected eagerly—a thousand dreams of ambition, of revenge, of money, were built upon the power of his arguments. This book, which had no existence, already gained its author a reputation for perseverance, ambi-

tion, and eloquence, of which he did not care to adduce any direct proofs. Not that he was incapable of making good the opinion of his fellows, but that life is short, dinners are long, the cares of the toilet are indispensable, and the *far niente* delicious; in addition to which our canon had two innocent, although insatiable passions; the one for horticulture, the other for music. How, then, amid such a crowd of occupations should he have found room to attack his contemplated book? Beside all this, he had not failed to discover how pleasant it is to talk of a book which is in progress, and how disagreeable to talk of one which is completed.

In other respects, he was an extremely good-natured churchman; tolerant, not devoid of wit, eloquent and orthodox among churchmen, good-humored, full of anecdotes, easy of access in the world, affable, cordial, and generous with artists.

Our young travellers were therefore received by him with the most gracious kindness.

"You are children," he said, "full of talent and resources, and I am much pleased with you. Moreover, you have genius, and one of you—which I know not—has the sweetest and most touching voice I ever heard in my life. That voice is a prodigy, a treasure; and I was sorry this morning, when you left the curacy so abruptly, at the thought that I never should see you, never hear you again. In a word, I lost my appetite; I was out of spirits, absent. The fine voice and exquisite music seemed to be permanently infixed in my ears, in my soul. But Providence, ever gracious to me, has brought you back to me, and perhaps your own good hearts, my children, have had something to do with this, for you must have perceived that I can understand and appreciate you."

"We are bound to confess, Monsieur Canon," said Joseph, "that chance alone brought us hither, and that we were far from reckoning on such good fortune."

"The good fortune is mine," replied the amiable canon; "and you shall sing for me—that is, not now, for you are tired, and I dare say hungry, and that would be selfishness on my part. You shall sup first, have a good night's rest in my house, and to-morrow we will have music; yes! music all day long. Andrew, conduct these young people to the offices, and take every possible care of them; But no! let them remain; set two covers for them at the end of my table, and let them sup with me."

Andrew obeyed his orders promptly, and even with a sort of good-humored pleasure; but dame Bridget showed a very different disposition; she shook her head—hunched up her shoulders, and grumbled between her teeth—"Very pretty folk, forsooth! to sit at your table—nice society, truly, for a person of your station in society!"

"Hold your tongue, Bridget!" replied the canon calmly. "You are satisfied with nothing and with nobody; and when you see any one enjoy a little pleasure, it makes you rancorous."

Some farther wrangling ensued—for Bridget answered back, and the canon disputed with her, much to the amazement of Consuelo, who was astonished to see a man of such station condescending to parley with his own servants, and to enter into the smallest details of the cookery and the service. The supper, however, was exquisite and abundant, even to profusion; and at the end of the repast the cook was called in, gently blamed for the composition of some dishes, affectionately praised for others, and learnedly instructed as to others

again, in which he was not absolutely perfect. But at dessert, when he had given his housekeeper also her share in his praises and reprimands, the canon did not forget to pass from these graver questions to the subject of music; and soon showed himself in a far better light to his young guests. He had received a good musical education, a foundation of sound study, just ideas, and an accurate taste. He was a very fair organist, and having sat down to the harpsichord after dinner, played several fragments of the old German masters, which he executed with much purity of taste, and according to the good traditions of old times. Listening to these was a source of pleasure to Consuelo, and very soon, having found a great book of that old music, she began to turn over the leaves, and forgetting both her own fatigue and the lateness of the hour, requested the canon to play her several pieces—which had struck her eye—in his bold, clear style. The canon was excessively pleased at being thus listened to. The music which he played was no longer the fashion, and he seldom met with amateurs after his own heart. He took, accordingly, a great fancy to Consuelo, while Joseph, worn out with fatigue, had fallen asleep in a treacherously comfortable arm-chair.”

“Truly,” cried the canon, in a moment of enthusiasm, “you are a most happily gifted youth. Your precocious judgment announces a marvellous hereafter. This is the first time in my life that I ever have regretted the celibacy which my life imposes upon me.”

This compliment made Consuelo both blush and tremble, for she thought he had discovered that she was a woman; but she instantly recovered herself when he added—“Yes! I regret having no children, for heaven might, perchance, have granted to me a son such as thou, who would have been the pride of my life, even if Bridget had been its mother. But tell me, my young friend, what think you of this Sebastian Bach, whose music is turning the heads of all this generation of *savans*? Do you also think him a prodigious genius? I have a volume of all his works there, which I have had collected and bound—because one must have everything, but I confess to you that being excessively difficult to read, I got tired of attempting it. Besides which, I have but little time for music, which I snatch from more serious occupations. Because you saw me somewhat engaged with my housekeeper about the little cares of my menage, you must not imagine that I am altogether a free or happy man. I am a slave, on the contrary, to an enormous, almost frightful work, which I have imposed upon myself. I am writing a book, on which I have been engaged about thirty years, and which any other person could hardly have composed in forty—a book which requires incredible study, late watching, patience that can surmount everything, and the deepest reflection; and, in truth, I think that it will make some stir.”

“And will it be soon finished?” asked Consuelo.

“Not yet, not yet!” replied the canon, desirous, perhaps, of concealing from himself that it was not even begun. “We were talking about the extreme difficulty of Sebastian Bach’s music, and to me, I confess that it seems to me a little fantastical.”

“I think, nevertheless, that if you would take the trouble to surmount your repugnance, you would come to the opinion, that he is a genius who enkindles, reproduces, and vivifies all science, past and present.”

“Well,” replied the canon, “if it be so, we will try all three of us to decypher something of it to-morrow. It is time now that you

should take some rest and that I should go to my studies. But to-morrow you will pass the day with me. That is understood; is it not?"

"The day!—that is saying a good deal, monsieur. We are in great haste to reach Vienna, but in the morning we shall be at your service."

The canon protested and insisted, and Consuelo pretended to yield, though inwardly determined to hurry over a little the slow movements of the great Bach, and to leave the priory about noon. When it was time to talk of going to bed, a warm discussion arose between dame Bridget and the first valet-de-chambre, concerning the quality of lodgings to be assigned to them—the obliging man-servant wishing to accommodate them with comfortable rooms in obedience to his master's wishes—the housekeeper wanting to put them in some miserable cells on the ground-floor, which discussion was not brought to a close until the canon himself, who had overheard from his dining-room, all that was passing, put an end to it, and summarily silenced Madam Bridget.

After our travellers had taken possession of their pretty dormitories, they long heard the harsh voice of the ill-tempered old woman grumbling like a wintry wind through the hollow corridors. But when the bustle, which harbingered the solemn retiring of the canon, had ceased, dame Bridget came a-tip-toe to the door of her young guests, and adroitly turned the key in each lock, so as to fasten them securely in. Joseph, who had never before in all his life slept in such a bed, was already buried in deep slumber; and Consuelo, after laughing at Bridget's terrors, followed his example. The idea that she, who had trembled every night of their journey, should now inspire terror to another, seemed in itself absurd, and she might well have applied to herself the fable of the frogs and the hare; but it would be too bold to affirm that Consuelo had ever heard of the fables of la Fontaine; although at this period, all the wits of the world were at issue on their merits. Voltaire made fun of them, and Frederick the Great, who desired to ape his philosophy, despised them from the bottom of his heart.

CHAPTER LXXVIII.

AT break of day, Consuelo, seeing that the sun shone brightly and feeling herself invited, by the merry warbling of the birds, who were already making good cheer in the gardens, to take an early walk, arose and tried to leave her chamber, but the night-watch was not yet removed, and Bridget still held her prisoners safe under lock and key. Consuelo thought at first that this must be some ingenious stratagem on the canon's part, who, in order to secure their musical services, had begun by making sure of their persons. But the young girl, who had become bold and active, since she had donned the male attire, saw that a descent from the window would be rendered very easy by a large vine which was supported by a massive trellis against the wall of the building. Descending then slowly and with precaution, in order to avoid injuring the fine grapes, she easily reached the ground, and hurried away into the garden laughing within herself at the sur-

prise and disappointment of Bridget, when she should find all her precautions useless.

Consuelo now saw all the superb fruits and sumptuous flowers, which she had so much admired by moonlight, under a different aspect. The breath of the morning, and the laughing rosy tints of the sun, gave a new poetry to those fair productions of the earth. A robe of lustrous velvet covered the fruits, the dew hung in pearls of crystal on all the branches, and the turf-plats, overlaid with silver, exhaled that slight refreshing odor which resembles the aspiring breath of earth striving to mount toward heaven, and blend with it in loving unison. But nothing could equal the freshness and the beauty of the flowers, still surcharged with the humidity of the night, at this mysterious hour of dawn, when they expand their petals, as if to display treasures of purity, and to outpour the most exquisite of odors, which the earliest and purest sunbeams are alone worthy to see and possess for one moment. The canon's *parterre* was a paradise of delights to a lover of horticulture. To Consuelo's eyes it was something too symmetrical and formal. But the fifty varieties of roses—the rare and charming hibiscuses, the purple stocks, the ever-varying geraniums, the sweet-scented daturas, deep opal cups impregnated with the ambrosia of the gods, the elegant asclepiades, subtle buds of poison, wherein the insect race find a voluptuous death; the splendid cactuses displaying glowing crimson hues, on strange and wrinkled stems, studded with angry thorns, a thousand curious and beautiful plants, of which Consuelo had never heard the names, any more than she knew the countries whence they came, for a long time occupied her attention.

Suddenly, in the midst of the fanciful harmonies of that delicious contemplation, Consuelo heard loud and painfully piercing human cries, appearing to come from a clump of trees which appeared to conceal the external walls. To these cries succeeded the roll of a carriage, and the carriage stopping, loud blows were struck against the iron grate which, on that side, closed the entrance into the garden. But, whether all the world was still asleep, or that no one chose to answer, they knocked again and again to no purpose, and the agonizing shrieks of a woman, intermingled with the hoarse oaths of a man shouting for succor, struck the walls of the priory, and awakened no more echoes from those senseless stones than they did from the hearts of the inhabitants. All the windows on that side of the house were so perfectly caulked, in order to prevent any interruption to the canon's slumbers, that no noise could penetrate the stout oaken shutters, padded and stuffed with horse hair. The valets were engaged in the offices behind the priory, and heard nothing of the din. Dogs there were none about the priory, for the canon loved not those troublesome guardians, which under the pretence of keeping rogues at a distance, disturb the slumbers of their masters. Consuelo first endeavored to get into the house to give notice of the arrival of travellers in distress, but all was so well closed that she could make no impression, and following her first impulse, she ran to the grate whence the voice came to her ears.

A travelling carriage, covered with luggage, and whitened with the dust of a long journey, stood at the entrance of the principal alley of the garden. The postilions had got off their horses, in order to knock at the inhospitable gate, while groans and lamentations issued from the carriage windows.

"Open," shouted the men to Consuelo. "Open, if ye be Christians! There is a lady dying here."

"Open," cried a woman, whose features were unknown to Consuelo, leaning as she spoke out of the window, and using the Venetian dialect. "Madam will die if she be not promptly aided. Open, then, if ye be men."

Consuelo, without reflecting on the results of her previous attempts, tried to open the gate, but it was closed with a huge padlock, the key of which was probably in dame Bridget's pocket. The bell was in like manner protected by a secret spring. In that tranquil and honest country, these precautions had not been taken against malefactors, but against noise and the annoyance of untimely visits. It was impossible, therefore, for Consuelo to do what she most desired, and she endured with pain the abusive language of the chamber-maid, who, talking to her mistress in Venetian, kept exclaiming—"Oh! the little idiot!—the little fool does not know how to open the door," until at length the lady herself showed her head, and cried out in bad German—"Ha! by the blood of the devil! do go and get some one who can open the gate, you wretched little animal!"

This energetic apostrophe reassured Consuelo as to the imminence of the lady's danger. "If she be near dying," said she to herself, "it must needs be a violent death!" and thinking thus, she addressed the lady, whose accent was clearly Venetian as that of her servant woman, in the same dialect.

"I do not belong to this house," said she; "I only received hospitality here for last night. I will go and try to awaken the owners, which will be neither quickly nor easily done. Are you in such danger, madam, that you cannot wait here a short time without despairing?"

"I am on the point of being confined, you fool," cried the traveller: "run, scream, break every thing, bring people and get me admitted here, and you shall be well paid for your trouble." And she began again to shriek at the top of her voice. Consuelo felt her knees tremble under her; for neither the face nor the voice of the woman was unknown to her.

"What is the name of your mistress?" she asked the waiting maid,

"What is that to you?" cried the waiting-maid, now entirely bewildered. "Run, you little wretch, or you shall get nothing at all from us."

"Ah!" I want nothing from you," answered Consuelo, with spirit, "but I want to know who you are, and I will know it. If your mistress is a musician, you will be received here eagerly, and if I am not mistaken, she is a celebrated singer."

"Go, my little one," said the lady within, who, in the intervals of pain, was calm and collected.

"You are not mistaken. Go, tell the people who live here, that the celebrated Corilla is at the door, almost dying, unless some charitable person or good artist will take compassion on me. I will pay—tell her that I will pay largely. Alas! Sophia," said she to her maid, "have me laid on the ground; I shall suffer less by the roadside than in this infernal carriage." Consuelo was already running to the priory, determined at all hazards to obtain access to the canon; and she could not even find room for wonder at the strange chance which brought her rival thither in such a pass; she was only anxious to assist her; but she had no occasion now to knock, for she found

Bridget, at length, aroused by the knocking, followed by the garden and valet-de-chambre.

"A fine story, truly!" she said, when Consuelo had told her the facts. "Do not go, Andrew, do not stir a foot, gardener. How should a lady have set out on a journey at such a time? And if she has, is it not her own fault? How can we hinder her sufferings? Let her be confined in her carriage, which she can be just as easily as with us, who have no idea of receiving such visitors."

This discourse, which was begun for Consuelo's benefit, and grumbled the whole length of the walk, was finished to Corilla's maid, through the gate, and while the travellers were exchanging reproaches, invectives, and even abuse with the ill-tempered housekeeper, Consuelo had entered the house, hoping to succeed with the goodness and artistic predilections of the canon. She sought in vain for the master's apartment, and only came near to losing herself in the large rambling building, with the details of which she was wholly unacquainted. At last, she met Haydn, who was looking for her, and who told her that the canon was in the orangery. They went thither together, and found the worthy man coming to meet them, beneath an arbor of jessamine, with a face as fresh and smiling as the fine autumnal morning. She was already beginning to lay before him the case of poor Corilla, when Bridget, appearing quite unexpectedly, cut her short with these words: "There is a vagabond down yonder at your gate, a theatrical singer, who says she is famous and who has the air and tones of a low drab. She says she is in child-birth, cries and swears like twenty devils, and insists on being confined here. See how you like that."

The canon made a gesture of disgust and refusal.

"Monsieur Canon," said Consuelo, "whatever this woman may be, she is still a woman—she is suffering, her life is perchance in danger, as well as that of the innocent creature whom God has called into this world, and whom religion commands you, perhaps, to receive into the pale of Christianity. You will not allow her to lie at your door, groaning and in agony."

"Is she married?" asked the canon, coldly, after a moment's consideration.

"I know not. Perhaps she may be; but what matters it. God has granted her the happiness of becoming a mother; it is for Him alone to judge."

"She told me her name, Monsieur Canon," resumed Bridget, violently, "and you must know her, you who are on terms with all the actors in Venice. Her name is Corilla."

"Corilla!" cried the canon. "Has she come from Venice already? She has a fine voice, I hear."

"In favor of her fine voice, open the door to her. She is lying in the dust at your gate," said Consuelo.

"She is a woman of evil life," replied the canon. "She made a great scandal at Venice, a year since."

"And there are many persons who envy your reverence this benefice, Monsieur Canon. Do you mark me? If an abandoned woman were to be confined here, you are undone—it would not be represented as a chance, much less as an act of charity!" said dame Bridget.

These words made a final impression on the canon. He laid them up in the sanctuary of his prudence, although he pretended to have scarcely heard them.

"There is," he said, "an inn within a hundred yards, let the lady go thither. She will find all that she requires there, and will be much better than at a bachelor's house. Go tell her so, Bridget; but politely, very politely. Show the postillions the inn; and you, my children," he continued, turning to Joseph and Consuelo, "come and try one of Bach's fugues with me, while they are getting breakfast ready for us."

"Monsieur Canon!" cried Consuelo, deeply moved, "will you abandon her——?"

But at this moment the canon stopped abruptly, in seeming consternation. "Ah!" he exclaimed, "here is my finest volkammeria dried up and dead. I have told the gardener often enough that he did not water it sufficiently. The rarest and most inimitable plant in my garden. Go, Bridget, call the gardener, that I may scold him."

"I will go first and send the famous Corilla about her business," said Bridget, retiring.

"And do you consent to this? Will you permit this, Monsieur Canon?" cried Consuelo, indignantly.

"It is impossible for me to do otherwise," he replied, in a soft voice, but with an accent which denoted a firmly planted resolution. "I desire that I may hear no more about it. Come, then, I am waiting to hear music."

"There is no more music for you here," answered Consuelo, energetically. "You are not capable of understanding Sebastian Bach, you who have no bowels of compassion. Ah! may your fruits and flowers perish! May the frost cut your jessamines, and kill your finest shrubs! May this soil, hitherto so fertile, which gives you everything in profusion, produce nothing for you now but brambles, for you have no heart, and avail yourself of the gifts of heaven, regardless of the rites of hospitality."

As she spoke thus, Consuelo left the canon gazing in astonishment about him, as if he really feared to see the curse of heaven called down by that fiery spirit, alight on his precious volkammerias, and cherished anemones. She ran to the grating which had not been opened, scaled it without hesitation, and followed Corilla to the miserable pot-house, to which, under the title of inn, the canon had directed her.

CHAPTER LXXIX.

JOSEPH HAYDN, who was by this time accustomed to surrender himself to the sudden impulses of his comrade, but endowed with a calmer spirit, and a more reflective character, did not hesitate to obey her, but he first went to fetch their knapsack and violin with its music, the bread-winner, the consoler, and the joyous companion of their route. Corilla was laid on one of those wretched beds common to German inns, in which you must choose, so small are they, whether your head or feet shall be exposed beyond the end. Unluckily there was no woman in the hovel: the mistress had gone on a pilgrimage to a place six leagues distant, and the girl of the house had been sent to drive the cow to pasture. An old man and a boy were keeping house and more alarmed than pleased at the arrival of

the rich travellers, suffered their house to be turned upside down without seeming to think of the mischief that might be done. The old man was deaf; the boy had been sent for the midwife of a neighboring village, at least a league distant. The postillions were much more disturbed about their horses, which had nothing to eat, than about their passengers; and she, abandoned to the care of her maid, who had lost her head, and was crying nearly as loud as she did herself, filled the air with her outcries, which more resembled the ravings of a lioness than the groans of a woman.

Consuelo, seized with terror and compassion, resolved that she would not forsake the unhappy creature.

"Joseph," she said to her companion, "return to the priory, even if you should be badly received there. Tell the canon to send hither linen, bedding, soup, wine, everything in short which a sick person requires. Speak to him kindly but firmly, and promise him, if necessary, that we will make music for him if he will assist this unhappy woman."

Joseph set forth, and poor Consuelo remained a spectator of the repulsive scene of a woman, without faith or hope, undergoing the august martyrdom of maternity, with blasphemy and imprecations. She never ceased to curse her destiny, her journey, the canon and his housekeeper—even the child that she was about to bring into the world—while she abused her maid servant to such a degree, that she rendered her utterly incapable of rendering her any service, and drove her, in tears, into the next room.

At times, when her pains ceased for a while, recovering her spirits and courage, she would talk quietly, and even jest with Consuelo, whom she did not recognise, and then again she would burst forth into the most hideous blasphemy. "Ah! cursed, thrice accursed, be the father of this child!" and as fresh pangs would seize her, she tore her neck-handkerchief asunder, and seizing Consuelo's arm with a gripe that left the impress of her nails in the flesh, she shrieked out, "Accursed! accursed! accursed! be the vile, infamous Anzoleto!"

At this moment Sophia returned into the chamber, and at the end of a quarter of an hour Corilla was delivered of a girl, which the maid wrapped in the first piece of clothing she could lay hands on in an open trunk. It was a theatrical mantle of tarnished satin, edged with fringes of tinsel, and it was in this miserable frippery that the pure betrothed of the noble Albert received on her knees the child of Anzoleto and Corilla.

"Come, madam, be consoled," said the poor serving girl, with an accent of simple and sincere good-nature. "It is all over, and you have got a beautiful little girl."

"Girl or boy, little care I, for I am in pain no longer," said Corilla, raising herself on her elbow, without looking at her child. "Give me a large glass of wine."

Joseph had now returned from the priory, bringing everything that a sick person could require, and that of the best, so that she had whatever she called for on the instant, and soon afterward, stretching herself out on the canon's comfortable cushions, she fell asleep, with all the easy abandonment which she derived from her iron constitution and her soul of ice. During her sleep the child was comfortably dressed, and that done, Consuelo, who felt nothing but disgust toward Corilla, gave the babe to the girl of the inn, who had returned, and seemed a good-natured person; then calling to Joseph, she took
 way back with him toward the priory.

"I did not promise the canon," said he, as they went on their way "to bring you back to the priory. He seemed ashamed of his conduct, although he affected to be very much at his ease. In spite of a little selfishness, he is a good man at heart, and seemed really glad to send Corilla whatever was necessary."

"I will recompense the good canon for my impetuosity," said Consuelo. "For, in truth, there are souls so hard and hideous, that weak minds should inspire us with pity only."

Far from being angry, the canon received them with open arms, forced them to breakfast with him, and then they all sat down to the piano. Consuelo soon made him understand the admirable preludes of the great Bach, and to put him into a thoroughly good humor, she sang to him all the finest airs she knew, without endeavoring to conceal her voice, and with little fear of his observing her sex or age; for the good canon appeared resolved to divine nothing which should run counter to his delight at listening to such music. He was truly a passionate lover of music, and his transports had a depth and sincerity which could not fail to touch Consuelo.

"You are a strange child—a child of genius," cried the canon, patting Consuelo's brown head with chaste and paternal fondness. "You wear the livery of poverty, who ought to be borne aloft in triumph. Tell me who you are, and whence have you learned all that you know?"

"From accident and nature, Monsieur Canon."

"Ah! you are deceiving me," said the canon, slyly. "You must be a son of Cafarelli or of Farinelli. But listen to me, my children," he added with a serious but earnest air, "I will not have you leave me. I take charge of you; stay with me. I have fortune, and it shall be yours. I will be to you what Gravina was to Metastasio. It shall be my happiness and glory. Attach yourself to me. You need only enter the minor orders; I will take care to procure some snug little benefices, and after my death you will find that I have some savings, which I have no idea whatever of leaving to that harpy Bridget."

As the canon uttered these words Bridget entered suddenly, and heard what he said. "And I," she cried in a choking voice, and with tears of rage—"and I intend no longer to serve an ungrateful master. It is long enough already that I have been sacrificing to you my reputation and my youth."

"Your reputation? your youth?" interrupted the canon, sneeringly, without being in the least put out. "Ah, you flatter yourself, my poor old woman. What you are pleased to call the one protects the other."

"Yes! yes!" she replied, "sneer as you will. But never expect to see me again. I quit a house in which I can establish neither decency nor order. Pay me my wages; I will not pass the night under your roof."

"Have we come to that?" said the canon, very calmly. "Well, Bridget, you give me great pleasure, and may you never regret it. I never dismiss any one from my service, and I believe if the devil were once in it, I should not turn him out. But if the devil wished to go, I am so good-natured that I should not hinder him, but should sing a *magnificat* to his departure. Go and make up your baggage, Bridget, and as for your wages, sum them up yourself, my child. Whatever you want, even if it were all that I possess, shall be yours, if you will only go at once."

"Oh, Monsieur Canon," exclaimed Haydn, who was not unmoved by this domestic scene, "you will greatly regret a servant so much attached."

"She is attached to my benefice," replied the canon, "and for my part, I shall only regret her coffee."

"You will soon be accustomed to doing without her coffee, Monsieur Canon," said Consuelo, very firm and stern, "and you are doing well. Be silent, Joseph, and speak for her no more. I will say it out before her, because it is the truth. She is evil-minded and hurtful to her master. He is good; nature made him noble and generous, but that woman renders him selfish. She checks all the good emotions of his soul, and if he keeps her, she will render him as hard and heartless as she is herself. Pardon me, Monsieur Canon, for speaking thus, but you have made me sing so much, and have so raised my enthusiasm by the display of your own, that I am almost out of my head. But believe me, I do not desire your fortune; I have not a wish—not a want. If I desired it, I could even be richer than you; and an artist's life is so full of risks, that perhaps you will survive me, and then it will be you who will find yourself inscribed on my will, in gratitude for what you have done in behalf of us to-day. To-morrow we set off, perhaps to meet no more, but we set off with hearts full of respect, of gratitude, and of love for you, if you discharge Madame Bridget, whose pardon I beg of you for this plain mode of speaking."

Two hours afterward the dispossessed queen departed from the priory, after having subjected it to not a little pillage. This the canon affected not to observe, and by the expression of supreme content which overspread his countenance, Haydn perceived that Consuelo had done him a real service. She, at dinner, to prevent his feeling the slightest regret, made coffee for him after the Venetian fashion, which is the best in the world. Andrew immediately set himself to take lessons of her, and the canon declared that he had never sipped better coffee in his life. They had music again in the evening, after sending to enquire after Corilla, who was already, as they brought word, sitting up in the arm-chair, which the canon had sent her. In the evening, they walked in the garden, by the light of a glorious moon, the canon leaning on Consuelo's arm, and still imploring her to take minor orders, and to attach herself to him as his adopted son.

"Beware," said Joseph to her, as they were parting at the doors of their chambers; "this good canon is becoming a little too seriously taken with you."

"Nothing should disquiet us while travelling. I shall no more become an abbe than I have become a trumpeter. M. Mayer, Count Hoditz, and the canon have all counted without a to-morrow."

CHAPTER LXXX.

NEVERTHELESS, Consuelo had retired to her own chamber, without giving Joseph the signal for departure at daybreak for which he had looked. She had reasons of her own for not hurrying her departure and Joseph was content to await them, too well pleased to pass

a few more hours in so pleasant a house, leading the jolly canonical life which he found so agreeable. Consuelo permitted herself to sleep until late in the morning, and did not appear until the canon's second breakfast, for he had the habit of rising very early, taking a slight and dainty repast, walking in his gardens and through his hot-houses, with his breviary in his hand, and then taking a second nap while awaiting a savory breakfast *a la fourchette*.

"Our neighbor, the travelling lady, is very well," said he to our young travellers, as soon as he met them. "I sent to enquire after her, and to let Andrew serve her breakfast. She expressed much gratitude for our attentions, and as she is about to set off this very day for Vienna, contrary to all prudence, she begs that you will go and see her, in order that she may recompense the charitable zeal you have shown in her behalf. Therefore, my children, breakfast as quickly as you can, and then go to her. Doubtless you will receive some pretty present from her."

"We will breakfast as slowly as we can, Monsieur Canon, and we will not go to see the sick woman. She has no longer need of us, and we have no need of her presents."

"Singular boy!" cried the canon, in astonishment. "Your romantic disinterestedness gains on me to such a degree that I shall never be able to part with you."

Consuelo smiled, and they sat down to table. The breakfast was delicious, and lasted nearly two hours; but the dessert was very different from what the canon anticipated.

"Your reverence," said Andrew, appearing at the door. "Mother Bertha, the woman of the inn, has brought you hither a large basket, on behalf of the lady who lay in."

"It is the silver I lent her, I suppose," said the canon: receive it, Andrew, it is your affair. The lady, then, is set on going to-day."

"She is gone, your reverence."

"Already! She must be mad. She must assuredly wish to kill herself."

"No, Monsieur Canon; she neither wishes to kill herself, nor will she kill herself," said Andrew.

"Well, Andrew, what are you doing there with so ceremonious an air?"

"Mother Bertha will not give me the basket, your reverence; she says she is charged to give it into your hands only, and she has something to say to you."

"Well, well; it is a scruple or an affectation, at having received a deposit. Let her come in, and we will get it over."

The old woman entered, and with many curtsies, deposited upon the table a great basket covered with a veil. Consuelo moved her hand toward it quickly, while the canon's head was turned toward Bertha, and having pulled the veil a little aside, said to Joseph, "This is what I expected. This is the cause of my remaining here. Yes; I was sure of it. Corilla was certain to act thus."

"Well, Mother Bertha," said the canon, at the same time. "So you have brought back the household stuff I lent your guest. Good—good—but I was in no wise in anxiety about it, and I am sure none of it is missing, without so much as even looking at it."

"Your reverence," replied the old woman, "my servant girl brought all that, and I have given it to your officers. Nothing was missing, and I am quite easy on that head; but, with regard to this

basket, I was sworn to deliver it to yourself only, and you know what it contains as well as I."

"I will be hanged if I do," said the canon, moving his hand carelessly towards the basket. But his hand remained as if struck by cataplexy, and his mouth stood half open with surprise, as the veil was moved and partly opened from within, and a little child's hand, rosy and delicate, showed itself, making a vague and feeble movement to grasp the canon's finger.

"Yes, indeed, your reverence," said the old woman, with a smile of confident satisfaction, "here it is, safe and sound, only wide awake and with a resolute determination to live."

The canon had absolutely lost the use of his tongue from astonishment, and the old woman continued, "By 'r lady, your reverence asked it of its mother to bring up and adopt! The poor lady had much trouble to determine on doing so; but at last we told her that her child could not be in better hands, and she recommended it to Providence as she gave it us to bring to you. As for me, she paid me very well. I ask nothing, and am very well satisfied indeed."

"Ah! you are satisfied, are you?" cried the canon, in a tragi-comic tone. Well, I am charmed to hear it. But now be so good as to carry away both the purse and the bantling. Spend the one, educate the other. It does not concern me the least in the world."

"I bring up the child!—Oh! no, indeed!—not I, your reverence. I am too old to take such a charge on myself as a new-born babe. They cry all night long, and my old man, deaf as he is, would never consent to such an arrangement as that."

"And I—pray how am I to arrange it? Many thanks, forsooth! So you counted upon that, did you?"

"Since your reverence asked the mother for it, I——"

"It is an atrocious falsehood—a gipsy trick!" cried the canon, "and I doubt not you are the confederates of this sorceress. Come—come—carry away the brat, give it to the mother, keep it yourself, do what you will with it, I wash my hands of it. If you want to get money out of me, you can have it. I never refuse money even to rogues and impostors; it is the only way by which to rid your house of them; but as to taking a child into my house, as for me, you may all go to the devil!"

"Ah! if it comes to that," said the old woman, very decidedly, "I will not do it, so may it not displease your reverence. I did not take charge of the child on my own account. As to being her confederates, we know nothing of such tricks, and your reverence must be joking when you accuse us of imposture. I am very much your reverence's servant, and I am going home. We have many pilgrims returning from the performance of a vow, who are very thirsty souls."

The old woman curtsied several times as she was going, and then returning on her steps, "I was on the point of forgetting," she said, "the child is to be called Angela in Italian. Upon my word, I forget how she spoke it."

"Angiolina—Anzoleta?" asked Consuelo.

"The last—exactly so," said the old woman, and again curtsying to the canon, she retired quietly.

"Well, what do you think of this trick?" asked the canon, when she was gone.

"I think it perfectly in keeping with her who invented it," said Consuelo, taking the child, which was beginning to grow fretful, out

of the basket, and feeding it gently with a spoonful or two of milk, which still continued warm in the canon's china cup.

"This Corilla is a demon, then, is she?" asked the canon; "do you know her?"

"By reputation only; but now I know her perfectly well, and you also, I think, Monsieur Canon."

"And it is an acquaintance of which I had just as readily be free. But what are we to do with this poor little outcast?" he added, casting a glance of pity on the child.

"I will carry it," said Consuelo, "to your gardener's wife, whom I saw yesterday nursing a fine little boy of five or six months old."

"Go then," said the canon, "or rather ring the bell, and they will call her hither. She will tell us of a nurse in some neighboring farm; not too near, however, for heaven only knows the injury which an evident interest in a child which falls from the clouds into his house may do to a man of any mark in the church."

"Were I in your place, Monsieur Canon, I would set myself above all such wretched considerations. I would neither anticipate or listen to the absurd suppositions of calumny. I would live in the midst of fools and their conjectures as if they had no existence. I would act as if they were impossible. Of what use else were a life of dignity and virtue, if it cannot ensure calmness of conscience and the liberty of doing good? Lo! your reverence, this child is entrusted to you. If it be ill cared for out of your sight, if it languish, if it die, you will never, I think, cease to reproach yourself."

After many objections on the part of the canon, whose timidity and apprehensions of public opinion warped him from his better will, and many arguments on that of Consuelo, the latter becoming more enthusiastic and energetic as the former began to yield, the point was carried.

"It is settled, then, your reverence," said Consuelo; "you will keep Angiolina in your own house, the gardener's wife will nurse her, and hereafter you will educate her in religion and in virtue. Her mother would have made of her a very devil; you will make of her a heavenly angel."

"You do what you will with me," said the canon, moved to tenderness, and suffering Consuelo to lay the child on his knees; "we will baptise the child to-morrow. You shall be its godfather. Had Bridget remained here, we would have compelled her to be godmother; her rage would have been amusing."

"As to Corilla's purse,—aye, indeed, it contains fifty Venetian sequins; we do not want it here. I charge myself with the present expenses and the future fortunes of the child, if it be not reclaimed. Take then this gold, it is well due to you, for the singular virtue and the great heart you have shown throughout all this."

"Gold to pay my virtue and the goodness of my heart!" cried Consuelo, waving away the purse in disgust, "and Corilla's gold too! the price of falsehood and of infamy. Ah! Monsieur Canon, it sullies our eyes. Distribute it among the poor, and it may so bring good fortune to our poor Angiolina."

For the first time perhaps in his life, the canon scarcely slept a wink. He felt a strange emotion and agitation within himself. His head was full of musical tones, of melodies, and modulations, which a slight doze interrupted every minute, and which, when at a minute's end he again awoke, he sought to remember and re-connect, without wish-

ing to do so, and as it were in his own despite, without the power of doing so. After waking and sleeping, and waking again, and endeavoring to sleep again, a hundred times in succession, a luminous idea struck him. He arose, took his writing desk, and resolved to work upon the famous book which he had so long undertaken, but never yet commenced. It was necessary for him to consult his dictionary of canonical law in order to set himself right on the subject; but he had not read two pages before his ideas became confused, his eyelids grew heavy, the book slid easily down from the desk to the carpet, the candle was put out by a sigh of delicious sleepiness, heaved from the powerful lungs of the good man, and he slept soundly and happily until ten o'clock in the morning.

Alas! how bitter was his waking, when with a listless and lazy hand, he opened the following note, which Andrew laid upon his waiter beside his cup of chocolate.

"We are departing, Monsieur and Reverend Canon. An imperious duty called us to Vienna, and we feared our inability to resist your generous solicitations. We are flying, as though we were ungrateful, but we are not so, and never shall we lose the memory of your hospitality toward us, and of your sublime charity toward the deserted child. We will come to thank you for it. Within a week you will see us again; deign therefore to defer until then the baptism of Angiolina, and to count on the respectful and tender devotions of your humble proteges,

"BERTONI, BEPPO."

The evening of the same day Consuelo and Joseph enter Vienna under favor of the darkness. Keller, the worthy wig-maker, was admitted into their confidence, received them with open arms, and paid the utmost attention to the noble-hearted girl in her travelling disguise. Consuelo lavished all her kindness upon Joseph's intended bride, though to her regret she found her neither graceful nor pretty. On the following morning, Keller braided Consuelo's dishevelled hair; his daughter aided her to resume the apparel of her sex, and showed her the way to the house in which Porpora had installed himself.

CHAPTER LXXXI.

To the joy which Consuelo felt, as she clasped in her arms her master and benefactor, succeeded a sense of pain, which it was long before she could subdue. A year had elapsed since she had seen Porpora, and that year of uncertainty, annoyance, and vexation had left deep traces of age and distress on the brow of the master. He had gained, moreover, that unhealthy fatness into which inaction and languor of the soul often cast organizations already beginning to give way. His eye had still its wonted brightness, and a certain exaggerated color on his cheeks betrayed fatal efforts to acquire, by means of wine, forgetfulness of his sorrows, or a return of inspiration, discouraged by age and disappointment. The luckless composer had flattered himself that he should recover at Vienna some chances of patronage and fortune. He had been received with cold esteem, and had found his

rivals, more fortunate than himself, in the full tide of imperial favor and of public admiration. Metastasio had written dramas for Caladara, for Predieri, for Fuchs, for Reuter, for Hasse; Metastasio, the court poet, *poeta Cesareo*, the writer of the day, the favorite of the muses and the ladies, the charming, the precious, the harmonious, the fluent, the divine Metastasio; in one word, he of the dramatic cooks, whose meats had the power of creating the surest appetite and the easiest digestion, had not written, and would not promise to write anything for Porpora. The maestro it might be had still ideas; he had certainly science, thorough comprehension of voices, fine Neapolitan methods, severe taste, expansive style, and proud and masculine recitations, the powerful and pompous beauty of which never has been equalled; but he had no public, and therefore he asked in vain for a poem. He was neither flatterer nor intriguer; his somewhat rash frankness brought enemies upon him, and his ill humor disgusted every body.

He even brought this last disqualification to bear on his reception of Consuelo.

"And why have you left Bohemia? What has brought you hither, unlucky child?" he said, after having embraced her tenderly;—"hither, where there are neither ears nor hearts to comprehend you? There is no place for you here, my daughter. Your old master has fallen into contempt; and if you would succeed, you had better imitate the rest. Pretend not to know me, or to despise me, like all those who owe me their talents, their fortune and their glory."

"Alas! and do you doubt me too, my master?" said Consuelo, whose eyes filled with tears. "Would you deny my affection and devotion, and cast back upon me the suspicion and the scorn which others have infused into your soul? Oh! my master! you shall see that I do not deserve this outrage. You shall see it. That is all I can say."

Porpora frowned darkly, turned his back upon her, walked two or three times up and down the room, returned to Consuelo, and finding nothing agreeable to say to her, took her handkerchief in his hands, drew it across her eyes with a sort of fatherly rudeness, saying, "Come, come!" Consuelo saw that he was pale, and that he was suppressing heavy sighs, by exertion of his chest, but he contained his emotion, and drawing a chair close to her—

"Come," he said, "tell me about your sojourn in Bohemia, and tell me why you came away so suddenly. Speak," he added, a little impatiently; "have you not a thousand things which you desire to tell me? Did you get tired yonder, or did the Rudolstadt treat you ill? Yes! I dare to say that they too are capable of having wounded and tormented your feelings. God knows that they were the only people in the world in whom I would have placed implicit trust; but God knows also, that all men are capable of every kind of evil."

"Say not so, my friend!" replied Consuelo.—"The Rudolstadt are angels, and I ought to speak of them only on my knees. But I was bound to leave them; it was my duty to fly from them, and that even without letting them know it, or taking leave of them."

"What do you mean? Is it that you who have wherewithal to reproach yourself as relates to them; must I blush for you, and blame myself for having recommended you to those excellent people?"

"Oh! no! no! God be praised, no! my master. I have nothing with which to reproach myself, and you have nothing at which to blush for me."

"What is it, then?"

Consuelo, who well knew how necessary it was to give short and prompt answers when Porpora was giving his attention to any fact or idea, related to him briefly, how Count Albert wished to marry her, and how she could decide on nothing until she had the advice of her adopted father.

Porpora grinned with rage and indignation.—"Count Albert," he cried, "the heir of the Rudolstadt, the descendant of the old kings of Bohemia, the lord of Riesenbergl! He marry you, the little gipsy! the ugly one of the school; girl without a father; the comedian without money or engagement! you, who have begged barefoot in the cross-streets of Venice!"

"Ma, your pupil! me, your adopted daughter!" replied Consuelo, with an air of quiet pride; "Yes, me, la Porporina!"

"Splendid dignity, and brilliant condition! In truth," said the maestro with a bitter sneer, "I had forgotten that part of the nomenclature—the last and only pupil of a master without a school; the future heiress of his rags and his dejection; the continuer of a name already effaced from the memory of men! There is certainly something to boast of in this—something wherewith to turn the heads of young men of noble birth!"

"Apparently, master mine," said Consuelo, with a melancholy and caressing smile; "we have not fallen so low in the opinion of noble men, as you are pleased to imagine; for it is certain that the count wishes to marry me, and I have come hither to ask your permission, or your protection."

"Consuelo," replied Porpora, in a cold, harsh tone, "I hate such absurdities as this. You ought to know that I detest boarding-school romances, and coquettish adventurers. Never would I have believed that you could have filled your head with such balderdash. You make me pity you; and if the old count—if the canoness—if the Baroness Amelia are informed of your pretensions, I say it to you once more, I blush for you."

Consuelo knew that it would not do to contradict the master when he was declaiming, or to interrupt him in the full swing of his oration; she allowed him, therefore, to work off his indignation, and when he had said to her all the most wounding and unjust things he could think of, she related to him, point by point, everything that had passed at the Giants' Castle, between herself, Count Albert, Count Christian, Amelia, the Canoness, and Anzoletto.

"You have done well then, Consuelo," said Porpora at last; "you have been prudent, you have been good—you have been strong, as I expected you to be. It is well. Heaven has protected you, and will recompense you by delivering you, once for all, from that insolent Anzoletto. As to the young count, you must not think of him—I forbid it. Such a fate is not suitable for you. The Count Christian will never permit you to become an artist again—rest assured of that. I know better than you do the indomitable pride of these nobles. Now, unless you hold illusions on that subject, which I should deem childish and senseless, I do not think you can hesitate an instant between the fortunes of the great, and the fortunes of a child of art. Answer me—what think you? By the body of Bacchus! one would say that you do not understand me."

"I understand you very well, my master, and I perceive that you do not understand one word that I have spoken to you."

"What I have understood nothing? I can understand nothing any longer—is not that what you mean?"

"No, you have not understood me," she replied very firmly. "For you suppose me to be actuated by impulses of ambition, which have never entered my mind. I do not envy the fortunes of the great, be assured of that, my master; and never say that I suffered the consideration of them to influence my opinions. I despise advantages which are not acquired by our own merit. You educated me in that principle, and I know not how to recede from it. But there is something in life besides vanity and wealth, and that something is precious enough to counterbalance the intoxication of glory, and all the joys of an artist's life. That is the love of a man like Albert—that is domestic happiness—that is the joys of a family. The public is a capricious, tyrannical and ungrateful master. If it should come to pass that I can love Albert as he loves me, I should think no more of glory, and probably I should be the happier therefore."

"What absurd language is this?" cried the maestro. "Have you become a fool? are you infected with German sentimentality? into how deep a contempt of art have you fallen, madam countess! But I will lose no more time in talking to a person who neither knows what she says nor what she wishes. You have no common sense, and I am your most obedient servant."

And with these words Porpora sat down to the piano-forte, and improvised, with a firm, dry hand several scientific modulations, during which Consuelo, hopeless of bringing him back to the subject that day, reflected on the means of putting him into a better humor. She succeeded, by singing to him some of the national airs which she had learned in Bohemia, the originality of which, greatly delighted the old maestro. Afterward they dined together very frugally, at a little table near the window. Porpora was poorly lodged; his dull and gloomy apartment looked out, always itself in disorder, on the angle of a narrow and deserted street. Consuelo, seeing that he was now in a good humor, ventured to mention Joseph Haydn to him. She told him, with an air of indifference, how she had met, when near to Vienna, a poor little devil, who had spoken of the school of Porpora with such respect and admiration that she had promised to intercede in his behalf with Porpora himself.

"Ah! and what is he, this young man?" asked the maestro; "to what career does he aspire? To be an artist, I presume, since he is a poor devil. Oh! I thank him greatly for his patronage. I will teach no one to sing henceforth who is not the son of a family. People of that kind pay well, learn nothing, and are proud of our lessons, because they fancy that they know something when they have passed through our hands. But artists are all cowards, all ungrateful, all liars and traitors. Let no one speak to me of them."

Consuelo strove in vain to divert him from these ideas; but finding them so obstinately fixed that there was no hope of removing them, she leaned a little way out of the window while the master's back was turned, and made two successive signs with her fingers; the first was to indicate to Joseph, who was waiting in the street for that preconcerted signal, that he must abandon all hope of being admitted a pupil of Porpora; the other told him not to make his appearance within half an hour.

Consuelo then talked of other things, to make Porpora forget what she had been saying; and at the end of half an hour Joseph knocked

at the door. Consuelo opened it — affecting not to know him — and returned to the master, saying that it was a servant who wanted a place.

“Let us see your face,” cried Porpora to the trembling youth; “who told you that I wanted a servant? I want nothing of the kind.”

“If you have no need of a servant,” said Joseph, a good deal disconcerted, but keeping up a bold countenance as Consuelo had advised him to do, “it is very unlucky for me, monsieur, for I have great need of a master.”

“One would suppose, to hear you, that it is by my means only that you can earn your bread,” replied Porpora. “Do you think I require a lackey to arrange all these things?”

“Yes, sir, I do indeed,” replied Haydn, affecting a sort of artless simplicity; “for everything is very much out of order.”

As he said this he began at once to set himself to work, arranging the apartments so symmetrically and so cold-bloodedly, that he almost sat Porpora laughing. Joseph was, in fact, playing to win or lose; for, in truth if his zeal had not pleased the maestro he might well have got paid by a caning.

“Here is a queer genius, who will serve me, whether I will or no!” said Porpora, watching him. “I tell you, idiot, that I have not the means of paying a servant. Do you still continue so eager?”

“Oh! as for that, monsieur, if you will only give me your old clothes, and a morsel of bread every day, I shall be very happy. I am so miserable, that I should be happy not to have to beg my bread.”

“But why do you not enter into some rich family?”

“It is impossible, monsieur, they say that I am too little and too ugly. Besides, I know nothing of music, and you know all the great noblemen like their lackeys to know how to play a little part on the flute or on the violin when they have music in their rooms, which, as for me, I have never been able to force a note of music into my head.”

“Ah! indeed, you know nothing of music, hey? Well, you are just the man I want. If you are satisfied with food and old clothes I will take you; for, now that I think of it, my daughter will want a diligent boy to run on her errands. Come, what can you do? Brush clothes, polish shoes, sweep the room, open and shut the door?”

“Yes, monsieur, I can do all that.”

“Well then, begin. Prepare the coat which is lying on my bed, for I am going at one o’clock to the ambassador’s. You shall accompany me, Consuelo. I will present you to Monsieur Korner, whom you know already, and who has just arrived from the baths with the signora. There is a little chamber there which I give to you; go and make a little toilette, while I prepare myself.”

Consuelo obeyed, crossed the ante-chamber, entered the small dark cabinet which was to become her apartment and put on her old black frock and the little white kerchief, which had journeyed with her on Joseph’s back.

“This is not a very pretty toilette,” thought she to herself, “in which to go to the ambassador’s; nevertheless they saw me begin in the same way at Venice, and it did not prevent me from singing well, and being listened to with pleasure.”

When she was ready, she re-crossed the ante-chamber, and found Haydn there, gravely employed combing out Porpora’s wig, which stood on its block. It was with difficulty that they both stifled a

laugh. But as she heard Porpora approaching, Consuelo became quite grave, and said as he entered, "Come! little one, make haste!"

CHAPTER LXXXII.

It was not to the Venetian embassy, but to the Venetian ambassador's house, that is, to the house of his mistress, that Porpora now carried Consuelo. Wilhelmina was a beautiful creature, infatuated with music, and deriving her only pleasure, her only pretension, from gathering around her as many artists and dilettanti as she could, without compromising the diplomatic dignity of Monseigneur Korner by too public a display. At the appearance of Consuelo she uttered a little cry of pleasure, and when fully satisfied that it was indeed Consuelo whom she saw before her, she received her with the utmost affection and good nature, as the Zingarella, the marvel of Saint Samuel's in the last year.

She had, at that time, mingled her voice with those of the genuine dilettanti to celebrate her success, and if she had spoken in *an aside* against the pride and ambition of the little girl, whom she had known as the humblest and most obscure pupil of the scuola, and who afterwards refused to place her voice at the disposal of Madame the Ambassador in *an aside*, and absolutely in the ear of the listener.

Now, however, when she saw Consuelo come to her, in the same quiet little dress she had worn of old, and when Porpora presented her officially, which he had never done before, vain and light as she was, Wilhelmina overlooked all, and thought she was playing a part of superb generosity when she kissed the Zingarella on both cheeks. "She is ruined," thought she. "She has committed some folly; or, perhaps, she has lost her voice, for she has not been heard of this long time. She comes back at our merciful disposal; now, therefore, is the time to pity her, to protect her, and, if possible, to bring her talents forward to her advantage."

Consuelo's manners were so gentle and conciliatory, that Wilhelmina, not discovering in her that tone of haughty prosperity which she had fancied to belong to her in Venice, felt quite at her ease with her, and loaded her with attentions. Some Italian friends of the ambassador's united with her in almost overpowering Consuelo with praises and with questions, which latter she contrived merrily and adroitly to avoid. But, on a sudden her face became grave, and shewed a certain degree of emotion, when, in the midst of a group of Germans, who were looking at her with curious eyes, she recognised a face which had troubled her before. It was the stranger, the friend of the canon, who had examined her and questioned her so closely three days before, at the house of the village curate, where she had sung the mass with Joseph Haydn. The stranger was now scrutinizing her with deep attention, and it was easy to see that he was questioning those who stood near him as to who she was. Wilhelmina perceived Consuelo's abstraction.—"You are looking at M. Holzbaüer?" said she. "Do you know him?"

"I do not know him," said Consuelo; "and I was ignorant that it was he at whom I am looking."

"He is the first to the right of the marble slab," said the ambassador's lady. "He is actually director of the court theatre, and his wife is the first cantatrice of the same theatre. And he makes a bad use of his position," she added, in a low voice, "In order to regale the court and the town with his own operas, which, between ourselves, are good for nothing. Would you like to make his acquaintance; he is a very gallant person?"

"A thousand thanks, signora," replied Consuelo, "I am of too little consideration to be presented to any one: and I am well assured beforehand that he will not engage me for his theatre."

"And wherefore not, my dear? Has that fine voice, which had not its equal in all Italy, suffered by your sojourn in Bohemia? for you have lived, as they tell us, all this time in Bohemia, the coldest and saddest country in the world. It is a very bad climate for the chest; and I am not astonished at your feeling its bad effects; but you will soon recover it, under the influence of our fine Venetian sun."

Consuelo, seeing that Wilhelmina was determined to consider the loss of her voice as a settled affair, abstained from giving any further contradiction, the rather that Wilhelmina had herself both asked the question and returned the answer. She did not torment herself, however, at all, in consequence of this charitable supposition, but only on account of the antipathy which she was sure to encounter at the hands of Holzbaüer, in payment of the somewhat abrupt and somewhat over-sincere observations which had escaped her in regard to his music at the breakfast at the parsonage. And Consuelo much feared that this adventure might reach the ears of Porpora, and enrage him against herself, and yet more against poor Joseph.

It was not so, however; Holzbaüer did not say a word of the adventure, for reasons which come to light hereafter; and, instead of showing the least animosity to Consuelo, he approached her and addressed her with glances full of real malignity, concealed under the guise of jovial kindness. She did not dare to ask him what was the secret of these; and, let the consequences be what they might, she was too proud not to confront them with tranquillity.

She was diverted from this incident by the face of a harsh, stern-looking old man, who nevertheless showed much eagerness to keep up a conversation with Porpora. But he, still faithful to his usual ill-humor, scarcely replied to him, and at each word made an effort and sought a pretext for getting away from him.

"That," said Wilhelmina, who was not annoyed at having ~~it~~ in her power to give Consuelo a list of the celebrities which crowded her saloon—"that is an illustrious master—that is the Buononcini. He has lately arrived from Paris, where he himself played a part on the violoncello, in an anthem of his own composition, before the king. You know that it is he who has been so long the rage in London, and who, after an obstinate struggle of theatre to theatre against Handel, has succeeded in conquering him at the opera."

"Do not say so, signora," said Porpora, with vivacity, who had just got rid of Buononcini, and overheard Wilhelmina's words. "Oh, say not such blasphemy. No one has ever conquered Handel!—no one will ever conquer him! I know my Handel, and you know him not as yet. He is the first among us all; and I confess to you, that although I had the audacity to strive with him in my extreme youth, I was crushed. It necessarily must have been so. It was just that it should be so. Buononcini, more fortunate, but neither more modest

nor more skillful than I, triumphed in the eyes of fools, and in the ears of barbarians. Do not, therefore, believe those who talk to you of such a triumph as that. It will be the eternal ridicule of my fellow-artist Buononcini; and the English will one day blush at having preferred his operas, to those of a genius, of a giant such as Handel."

Wilhelmina endeavored to defend Buononcini, and contradiction having excited the wrath of Porpora, "I tell you," said he, without caring whether Buononcini heard him or not,—“I tell you, I will maintain that Handel is superior even in opera to all the men of the past and of the present age. I will prove to you immediately. Sit down to the piano, Consuelo, and sing us the air which I will designate to you."

"I am dying with desire to hear this admirable Porporina," replied Wilhelmina. "But I implore you, let her not make her first debut here, in presence of Buononcini and M. Holzbaüer, by playing the music of Handel. They could not be flattered by such a selection—"

"I know that very well," said Porpora, "it is their living condemnation—their sentence to death."

"Well, if that be the case," replied she, "make her sing something of your own, master."

"You know, without doubt, that to do so will excite no person's jealousy! But I desire that she sing Handel! I will have it so!"

"Master, do not require me to sing to-day. I have just arrived from a long journey—"

"Certainly, it would be merely abusing her good nature, and I am sure I do not require it of her," said Wilhelmina. "In presence of the judges here collected, and especially of M. Holzbaüer, the director of the imperial theatre, it would be compromising your pupil. Beware what you are doing."

"Compromising her—what are you thinking about?" said Porpora abruptly—"have I not heard her sing this morning, and do not I know whether she runs any risk of compromising herself in the presence of these Germans?"

This debate was fortunately interrupted by the arrival of a new comer, whom all the world made haste to welcome, and Consuelo, who had seen and heard this sharp-voiced, effeminate-looking man, with abrupt manners and a blustering voice, at Venice in her childhood, although she now saw him grown old, faded, ugly, ridiculously curled, and dressed in the worst taste, like a superannuated Celadon, instantly recognised him, so deep a memory had she retained of the incomparable, inimitable sopranisto majorano, named Caffarelli, or rather Caffariello, as he was called everywhere except in France.

It was impossible to look upon a more impertinent coxcomb than Caffariello; the women had spoiled him by their caresses—the acclamations of the public had turned his head. He had been so handsome; or, to speak more correctly, so pretty in his youth, that he had made his appearance in Italy in female parts; but now that he was running hard on his fiftieth year, and he even seemed older than he in truth was, as is frequently the case with sopranists, it was difficult to conceive how he could have enacted Dido or Galatea without a strong inclination to laugh. To make up for the effeminacy of his person, he gave himself great swaggering airs, and at every assertion raised his clear soft voice, without having the power to change its tones. Nevertheless, under all his extravagancies and under all that excess of vanity

Caffariello still had his good side. He felt the superiority of his talents too much to be amiable; but he felt also the dignity of his position as an artist too highly ever to sink into the courtier. He held front obstinately and madly to the most important persons, even to sovereigns themselves, and on that account, he was odious to the low-bred flatterers whom his impertinence rebuked so severely. The true friends of art pardoned him everything, in consideration of his genius as a virtuoso; and despite all the acts of cowardice which were laid to his charge as a man, it was undeniable that there were many features worthy of remark in his life—features of courage and generosity, as an artist.

On entering, Caffariello bowed very slightly to the whole assembly, but went up and kissed the hand of Wilhelmina, tenderly and respectfully, after which he addressed Holzbäuer, his director, with the manner of a protector, and shook hands with his old master, Porpora, with careless familiarity. Divided between indignation at his manners, and the necessity of humoring him—for by asking the theatre for an opera of his, and playing the first part, Caffariello had it in his power to give completely a new turn to the maestro's fortunes, Porpora began to compliment him, and to question him on his triumphs in a tone of railery too delicate for the comprehension of his mind, thoroughly impregnated with coxcombry.

He fell accordingly into a strain of the most impertinent rhodomontade, in which Porpora encouraged and led him insidiously onward, until the whole company were laughing in their sleeves. At last, however, perhaps suspecting that he had gone too far, he suddenly changed the subject. "Well! maestro," said he to Porpora,—"have you brought out many pupils of late in Venice? Have you produced any who gave you much hope?"

"Speak not of them to me. Since you, my school has been barren. The Lord made man, and he rested. So soon as Porpora had produced Caffariello, he crossed his arms, and thenceforth his work was ended.

"Good master," cried Caffariello, charmed by the compliment, which he took perfectly in good part, "you are too indulgent to me. You had, however, some pupils in the *Scuola Dei Mendicanti*, who promised a good deal. You produced the little Corilla, for whom the public had a little fancy. A handsome creature, upon my honor!"

"A very handsome creature, and nothing more."

"Really, nothing more?" asked M. Holzbäuer, whose ears were ever open."

"Nothing more, I tell you," replied Porpora, in a tone of authority.

"It is well to know that," said Holzbäuer, in a whisper in his ear. "She arrived here yesterday evening, and, as I am told, very sick; but for all that I received propositions from her this morning for an engagement at the court theatre."

"She is not what you want," answered Porpora. "Your wife sings ten times better than she."

"I thank you for your advice," said the director.

"What? and no other pupil over and above the plump Corilla?" rejoined Caffariello. "Venice is pumped dry then? I had a fancy to be here in the spring with Tesi."

"And why not?"

"Tesi is fixed on Dresden. Shall I not then find a kitten to mew in Venice? I am not difficult, neither is the public, when it has a prime

uomo of my capacity to take the whole opera on his shoulders. A pretty voice, with intelligence and docility, will be all I should require for the duets. Ah! by the way, maestro, what did you do with a little yellow-faced thing I saw with you?"

"I have taught many little yellow-faced things."

"Oh! but she, I mean, had a prodigious voice, and I recollect that I said to myself, as I heard her—"Here is an ugly little girl that will make a hit. I even amused myself by singing something with her. Poor little girl, she cried for admiration."

"Ah! ah!" said Porpora, looking at Consuelo, who blushed as red as the maestro's nose.

"What the devil was her name?" resumed Caffariello. "An out-of-the-way name. Come, master, you must recollect her; she was as ugly as all the devils."

"That was I," said Consuelo, who got over the embarrassment, frankly and good-humoredly, and advanced merrily and respectfully toward Caffariello.

Caffariello was not put out so easily. "You?" said he, jestingly, as he took her by the hand,—"You are telling a fib, for you are a very handsome girl, and she of whom I speak——"

"Oh! it was really I," said Consuelo. "Look at me well, and you cannot but remember me. Oh! I am the same Consuelo."

"Consuelo! yes, that was her devilish name. But I do not recollect you in the least, and I am afraid they have changed you. My child, if in gaining beauty you have lost your voice and the talent which you foreshadowed, you would have better done to remain ugly."

"I want you to hear her," said Porpora, who was eager that Holzbauer should hear his pupil. And he pushed Consuelo toward the harpsichord somewhat in spite of herself; for it was long since she had played before a learned auditory, and she was not prepared to sing to-night.

"You are mystifying me," said Caffariello. "It is not the same whom I saw in Venice."

"You shall judge," replied Porpora.

"Really, maestro, it is cruelty to make me sing when I have fifty leagues of dust in my throat," said Consuelo timidly.

"Never mind that! Sing!" said the maestro.

"Be not afraid of me, my child," said Caffariello, "I know what indulgence the circumstances require, and to prevent your being afraid of me, I will sing with you if you please."

"On that condition, I will obey," she answered, "and the pleasure shall have in hearing you will prevent me thinking of myself."

"What can we sing together?" said Caffariello to Porpora. Choose a duet for us."

"Choose for yourself," said Porpora; "there is nothing she cannot sing with you."

"Well then, something of your own composition, maestro; I wish to give you pleasure to-day, and besides I know that the Signora Wilhelmína has all your music bound up and gilded with oriental luxury."

"Yes," grumbled Porpora between his teeth; "my works are more richly clad than I."

Caffariello took up the music books, turned the leaves and chose a duet from *Eumenes*, an opera which Porpora had written at Rome

for Farinelli. He sang the first solo with that grandeur, that perfection, that mastery, which caused all his absurdities to be forgotten on the instant, and his excellences only to be remembered and enthusiastically admired. Consuelo felt herself reanimated and revived, by the power of that extraordinary man; and she, in her turn, sang her female solo, better perhaps than she had ever sung in her life. Caffariello did not wait till she had ended, but interrupted her several times by explosions of applause. "Ah! *Cara!*" he cried several times, "now indeed I recognise you. You are indeed the marvellous child I heard in Venice, but now *Figlia mia, tuu sei un portento*, and it is Caffariello tells you so."

Wilhelmina was a little surprised, perhaps a little disconcerted at finding Consuelo even more powerful than at Venice, but made nevertheless the most of her admiration. Holzbaüer always smiling and admiring, preserved a diplomatic reserve in regard to an engagement. Buononcini declared that Consuelo surpassed both Madame Hasse, and Madame Cuzzoni; and the ambassador went into such transports that Wilhelmina appeared frightened—especially when she saw him take off a great saphyr from his own finger to place it on that of Consuelo, who scarce knew whether to accept or refuse it. The duo was furiously encored, but the door opened and the servant announced with respectful solemnity M. le Comte de Hoditz. All the world rose with a common instinct of respect, not to the most illustrious, not to the best, but to the richest.

"I must be very unlucky," thought Consuelo within herself, "to meet here suddenly and unexpectedly, and without an opportunity of saying a word in private with them, two persons who saw me on my journey with Joseph, and who must naturally have formed a bad opinion of my morals and of my relations with him. It matters not, honest and worthy Joseph; at the risk of all the calumnies which they may raise up against me, I will never disavow you either by word or in heart."

Count Hoditz, all blazing with embroideries of gold, advanced toward Wilhelmina, and by the manner in which he kissed her hand, Consuelo easily perceived the difference between such a mistress of a house and the proud patricians she had seen at Venice.

Consuelo was soon called upon to sing again, she was cried up to the skies, and she literally shared with Caffariello the honors of the evening. At every moment, however, she expected to be approached by Count Hoditz, and to be compelled to bear the brunt of some malicious joke. But strange to say, Count Hoditz never once came near the piano, toward which she endeavored to turn herself so that he should not see her features; and when he had once asked her name and age, he did not appear even to have heard of her before. The fact is, he had never yet received the imprudent letter, which in her traveller's audacity she had addressed to him by the wife of the deserter. He had, besides, a very indifferent sight, and as it was not then the fashion to make use of glasses in a crowded assembly, he but very vaguely distinguished the pale face of the cantatrice. It will perhaps appear strange that such a maniac for music as he pretended to be, should have felt no curiosity to see so remarkable a virtuoso nearer at hand.

It must be remembered that this Moravian lord admired only music of his own composition, his own style, and his own singers. E had no sympathy with great talents; he loved on the contrary to beat

them down in their estimate of their value, and in their pretensions; and when he was told that Faustina Bordoni was making 50,000 francs per annum in London, and Farinelli 150,000, he was wont to shrug his shoulders and say, that he had singers of his own performing at his own theatre of Roswald, in Moravia, for 500 francs a year, who were worth Farinelli, Faustina, and M. Caffariello into the bargain, the latter being especially insupportable to him—indeed, his very antipathy, for the simple reason, that in his own sphere and style, M. Horditz had precisely the same absurdities and affectations as the singer.

He whispered and tittered therefore with Wilhelmina, during the last piece which Consuelo sang; and then, seeing Porpora shooting furious glances at him, went out quickly, having enjoyed no pleasure in the company of these pedantic and badly instructed musicians.

CHAPTER LXXXIII.

CONSUELO's first movement on returning to her room, was to write to Albert; but she soon found that it was by no means as easy to do this as she had at first imagined. In her first hurried ideas she began to relate to him all the incidents of her journey, when a fear came over her that she was in danger of moving him too deeply by the picture of her fatigues and dangers, which she was thus setting before his eyes. She remembered the sort of delirious fury into which he had fallen when she had told him, in the cavern, the terrors which she had confronted in coming to find him. She tore the letter; and then imagining that to a mind and organization such as his, a single and dominant idea, clearly expressed, was the most needful, she set to work again.

But again, what had she to announce to Albert? What could she promise or affirm to him anew? Was she not in the same state of irresolution, in the same alarm, as at her departure from the castle? If she had come for refuge to Vienna rather than elsewhere, was it not to seek the protection of the only legitimate authority she had to recognise in life? Porpora was her benefactor, her father, her supporter, her master, in the most religious acceptation of the word. Near him she felt herself an orphan no longer; she did not even admit the right as possessed by her of disposing of herself, following the inspiration of her heart or her reason only. Now Porpora blamed the idea of a marriage which he regarded as a murder of genius, as the immolation of a great destiny at the shrine of a romantic devotion. He railed at it, and rejected it with all his energies. At Riesenbergh also, there was an old man, generous, noble, and tender, who offered himself as a father to Consuelo; but can one change fathers under the exigency of circumstances, and when Porpora said no, could Consuelo accept the yes of Count Christian?"

She began again, and tore up the beginnings of twenty letters, without being able to satisfy herself with one. In whatever style she set out, she found herself at every third word making some rash assertion, or manifesting some doubt, either of which might have had consequences the most fatal. At last she went to bed, perfectly worn out with weariness, vexation and anxiety, and suffered there for a long

time from cold and sleeplessness, without being able to arrive at any resolution, at any clear conception of her future destiny. At length she fell asleep, and remained in bed late enough to allow Porpora who was a very early riser, to get out of the way on his round of visits. She found Haydn occupied as the day before, arranging the furniture and brushing the clothes of his new master. "Come then, fair sleeper," said he, as he saw his friend appear, "I am dying of ennui, of sadness, and more than all, of fear, when I do not see you, my guardian angel, between myself and that terrible man. He seems always to be discovering my intentions, to be on the point of turning my stratagems against myself, of shutting me up in his old harpsichord, in order to kill me, by harmonious suffocation. He makes my hair stand up on my head, does your Porpora! and I cannot persuade myself, that he is not an old Italian devil; the Satan of that country being admitted to be much more wicked and much shrewder than ours here at home."

"Comfort yourself, my good friend," said Consuelo, "our master is not unkind, he is only unhappy. Let us begin by exerting all our cares to give him a little happiness, and we shall soon see him soften, and return to his natural character. Come, Beppo, let us go to work, so that when he returns he shall find his poor home somewhat more comfortable than it has been to him of late. First, I am going to examine his clothes, to see what is wanting."

"What is here will not take long to count," said Joseph, "and it is very easy to be seen; for I never knew a wardrobe, unless it were my own, poorer, or in worse condition."

"Well, I shall see to renovating yours also, Joseph, for I also am a debtor to you. You fed me and clothed me all along our journey. But let us think first of Porpora. Open that closet. What! only one coat?—that which he wore last night at the Ambassador's?"

"Alas! that is all. A maroon-colored coat, with cut steel buttons, and not very fresh either. The other, which he put on to go out, is so dilapidated and shabby, that it is a pity to look at it. As to a dressing-gown, I know not if such a thing ever existed, but I have been searching for it in vain for an hour."

Consuelo and Joseph renewed their search, and soon found that Porpora's dressing-gown was an imaginary article; and when count was taken of his shirts, there were but three, and those in utter ruin, and so with all the rest.

"Joseph," said Consuelo, "here is a handsome ring which was given to me yesterday in payment of my songs. I do not like to sell it, for that would draw attention to me, and, perhaps, indispose people toward me, on account of my cupidity. But I could offer it in pledge, and borrow on it what money is necessary to us. Keller is honest and intelligent; he will know well what price to set on that jewel, and will surely know some usurer, who, taking it in pledge, will advance me a good sum on it. Go quickly, and return."

"It will not be long doing," replied Joseph. "There is a sort of jeweller, an Israelite, who lives in Keller's house; and as the latter is a sort of factotum for secrets of that kind to many a noble lady, he will easily get you the money within an hour; but I will have nothing for myself. Do you hear, Consuelo? You yourself, whose baggage travelled so far on my shoulder, are in great need of a better toilet, and you will have to appear to-morrow in a gayer dress than that."

"We will settle our accounts hereafter and according to my taste,

Beppo. Not having refused your services, I have the right to force mine upon you. Now run to Keller's."

In a word, within an hour Haydn returned with Keller and 1,500 florins, and Consuelo having explained her wishes, Keller went out and brought a friend of his, a tailor, whom he reported to be discreet and expeditious, and who, having measured Porpora's coat and other garments, engaged to produce within a few days two other complete suits, a good wadded dressing-gown; and as for linen and other necessities for the toilet, he promised to order them of a workman whom he could recommend.

"Now then, signora," resumed Joseph, who, unless when they were tête-à-tête, had the good taste to speak very ceremoniously to his friend, so that no one should form a false idea of the nature of their friendship, "Will you not now think of yourself? You brought hardly anything with you from Bohemia; and what is more, your clothes are not in the fashion of this country."

"I was on the point of forgetting that important affair. Good Mr. Keller must again be my counsellor and my guide."

"Ah! indeed," said Keller, "there I am in my own line, and if I do not get you up a dress in the best taste, call me a presuming ignoramus."

"I commit myself to you, my good Keller. Only I tell you that in general I have a simple taste, and that things suiting, strong colors neither suit my habitual paleness, nor my simple fancy."

"You do me injustice, signora, in supposing that I require the information. Is it not my profession to know what colors must be assorted to what faces, and do I not see in your face the expression of your natural disposition? Be at your ease, you will be satisfied with me, and very soon you shall be in readiness to appear at court, if you desire it, without ceasing to be as simple and as modest as you now appear. To adorn the figure without changing it, is the true art of the hairdresser, as well as of the costumer."

"Yet one word in your ear, good Monsieur Keller," said Consuelo, moving the wig-maker away from Joseph. "Will you have Master Haydn newly dressed from head to foot? With the remainder of the money, you will purchase a handsome silk frock for your daughter, to wear on her wedding day. I hope it will not be far distant; for if I have success, I may be useful in aiding our friend to make himself known. For he has talent—much talent, I can assure you."

"Has he really, signora? I am very happy at what you tell me, for I always suspected it. What do I say? I was sure of it from the first day, when I heard him sing in the school as a little child."

"He is a noble youth," said Consuelo, "and you will one day be recompensed by his gratitude and faith towards you, for all that you have done for him; for you also, Master Keller, are, I well know, a worthy man, and of a generous heart. Now tell me," said she, drawing nearer to him, "have you done what we agreed upon concerning Joseph's patrons? The idea was yours,—have you put it in execution?"

"Indeed I have, signora," replied Keller. "To say and to do are the same thing with your humble servant. As I waited on my customers this morning, I first mentioned it to monseigneur, the Venetian Ambassador—I have not the honor of waiting on himself, but I dress his secretary's hair—and then to the Abbe Metastasio, and to Mademoiselle Martinez, his pupil, whose head is also under my care.

I shall persist, by one means or other, in making it known to all my customers; and after that, I will make customers, in order to make it known yet further, till there shall be no danger of its reaching the ears of Master Porpora."

"If I were a queen, I would instantly nominate you my ambassador," replied Consuelo, "but I see the maestro coming—make your escape, good Master Keller, so that he may not see you."

"And why should I escape, signora? I will begin dressing your hair, and it will be thought that you sent for the first hairdresser by your valet, Joseph."

"He has a thousand times more sense than we," said Consuelo to Joseph, and she abandoned her black hair to his delicate fingering, while Joseph resumed his apron and dusting brush, and Porpora slowly ascended the stairs, humming a phrase of his forthcoming opera.

CHAPTER LXXXIV.

As he was very absent by nature, Porpora did not even observe, as he kissed his adopted daughter on the forehead that Keller was holding her hair, and he set to work immediately hunting among his music for the manuscript of the phrase which was running in his head; but on perceiving his papers, which were ordinarily scattered at random over the top of the harpsichord, arranged in symmetrical files, he at once recovered his full powers of observation.

"The miserable devil!" he exclaimed, "he has presumed to touch my manuscript. This is ever the way with valets. They think they are arranging, when they are merely piling up! I had good cause, indeed, that I must take a valet; this is the beginning of my misery."

"Forgive him, master," said Consuelo, "your music was in absolute chaos."

"It was, at least, a chaos in which I could find my way; I could get up in the night and find any part of my opera which I wanted, only by feeling my way. Now I know nothing about it any more. It will be a month before I shall be able to rearrange it."

"No, master; you will find your way at once and without difficulty. It is I who am in fault, moreover; and although the pages were not numbered, I am sure I have put them all in their places. Look, I am sure you will read more easily in the music-book which I have made, than you could on the loose leaves, which a gust of wind might carry away at any moment."

"A gust of wind! Do you take my room for the lagunes of Venice?"

"If not a gust of wind, at least a wave of a broom."

"And pray what business has any one to sweep and dust my apartment? I have lived here fifteen days, and never have allowed any one to enter it."

"I perceived as much," said Joseph to himself. "Well, master you must permit me to alter that habit altogether. It is unwholesome to sleep in a room which is not aired and cleaned every day. I will take it on me to re-establish daily the disorder which you like after Beppo has arranged and swept everything."

"Beppo—who is Beppo? I know no Beppo."

"Beppo—why that is he," said Consuelo, pointing to Joseph; "his name is so hard to pronounce that your ears would have been tortured by it every moment. I gave him the first Venetian name I thought of. Beppo is good, it is short, and it can be sung well to music."

"As you will," said Porpora, getting into a better humor, and beginning to turn over his music sheets, which he found arranged correctly, and sewed up in a neat volume.

"Master, have you breakfasted?" asked Consuelo, whom Keller had now set at liberty.

"Have you breakfasted, yourself?" asked Porpora, half anxiously, half impatiently.

"I have breakfasted; and you, master?"

"And that boy—that—Beppo; has he eaten anything?"

"He has breakfasted; and you, master?"

"Have you, then, found anything to eat here? I did not remember that I had any provisions."

"We have breakfasted very well; and you, master?"

"And you, master?—and you, master?—Go to the devil with your questions."

"Master, you have not breakfasted?"

"Ah! I see the devil has got into my house, and will never leave me at peace again. Come here, I pray you, and sing me this phrase. Now, attention."

Consuelo approached the piano, and sung the phrase over and over again; while Keller, who was a dilettante of great force, stood at the other end of the room, comb in hand, listening with all his ears. The maestro, who was not content with this phrase, made her sing it over and over again, now dwelling on these notes, now on those, seeking the shade of tone which he had conceived, with a degree of obstinacy which could be equalled only by the patience and submission of Consuelo. During this time, Joseph, at a sign from her, brought in the chocolate which she had prepared, while he went for Keller, and understanding her intentions, set it down within reach of Porpora, without saying a word. Before long, as if mechanically, the master took it, poured it into a cup, and swallowed it eagerly; a second followed, reinforced by a goodly piece of bread and butter, and Consuelo, growing a little impudent, said, as she saw him eat with pleasure:

"I knew very well, master, that you had not breakfasted."

"It is true," said he, good-humoredly. "I believe I forgot it. I often do so when I am composing, and I know nothing till, in the course of the day, I feel spasms in my stomach."

"And then you drink brandy."

"Who told you that, little fool?"

"I found the bottle, master."

"Well, what is that to you? You are not going to forbid me brandy, are you?"

"Yes, I shall forbid you brandy. You were sober at Venice, and then you were well."

"Yes, that is true," said Porpora, sadly. "I fancied that everything went wrongly there, and that everything would go on better here. However, all goes from ill to worse with me. Fortune, health, inspiration, everything!"—and he buried his head in his hands.

"That is because you have not your good Venetian coffee, which

gives you so much strength and gaiety, and instead of that, seek to stimulate yourself, like the Germans, with beer and brandy, which are killing you."

"Ah! this is still the truth. My good Venetian coffee was my great source of health, genius, inspiration. All that one drinks here makes one mad or stupid."

"Well, master, resume your coffee."

"Coffee, here? I will not. It makes too much trouble; one must have a servant-woman, kitchen furniture to be washed—and that gets broken with a discordant crash in the middle of a harmony. No, no. My bottle——"

"That gets broken, too. I broke it this morning putting it into the closet."

"You broke my bottle, hey. I don't know what prevents me from breaking my cane over your head, you ugly little thing."

"Pooh! you have been telling me that these fifteen years, and you have never so much as given me a fillip yet."

"Chatterbox! Will you sing? Will you get me through this accursed phrase? I do not believe you can sing it now, you are thinking of so many other things this morning."

"You shall see if I do not know it by heart," said Consuelo, closing the book abruptly, and then singing it as she thought it ought to run, that is to say, differently from Porpora's mode of composition. Scarcely had she ended, before he started from his chair, clapping his hands and crying, "That is it! that is it! That is what I wanted to hit, and could not hit. How the devil did it come into your head?"

"Is it not as you wrote it? Can it be that by chance I—no, no, it is your phrase."

"No, cheat, it is yours," said Porpora, who, in spite of his excessive vanity, was candor itself. "No, it is yours. It is good, and I will turn it to my profit."

Consuelo then sang it over several times. Porpora wrote it down, and then clasping her in his arms, cried:

"You are the devil—I always thought you were the devil!"

"A good devil, believe me, master," said Consuelo, smiling.

Porpora, transported with joy, began to feel about under the table for the neck of his bottle; then, finding it was gone, he commenced drumming on the music desk, and, taking up the first thing he found, swallowed it. It was excellent coffee, which Consuelo had prepared at the same time with the chocolate, and which Joseph, at a sign from her, had just brought up almost boiling. "Oh! nectar of the gods!—oh! delight of the musician!" exclaimed Porpora. "What fairy has brought thee from Venice beneath her wing?"

"The devil," answered Consuelo.

"You are an angel, a fairy, my poor child!" said Porpora, bending over his desk. "Poor imprudent children! you wish to comfort my sad life, but you know not what you do. I am devoted to desolation, and your cares will only make my lot the more deplorable when these few bright days shall have passed over."

"I will never leave you," cried Consuelo, "never. I will always be your daughter and your servant."

Porpora buried his bald head among the leaves of his music-book and burst into tears.

For a few days after this Consuelo was kept within doors by a cold. She had travelled, thinly clad, with only a straw hat, without a cloak

and without a change of raiment, sleeping in the open air at times, and always exposed to all the capricious changes of the atmosphere, without taking the slightest hoarseness; but now, immured in Porpora's gloomy lodgings, she felt the cold and discomfort paralyzing at once her energies and her voice. Porpora was desperately out of temper at this disappointment, for he knew that haste alone could procure his pupil an engagement at the royal theatre; for Madame Tesl, who had been induced to go to Dresden, now seemed to hesitate, seduced by the entreaties of Caffariello, and the brilliant offers of Holzbäuer, who was anxious to attach so brilliant an artist to his theatre. Corilla, on the other hand, who was recovering from her confinement, was intriguing for an engagement with such friends as she had among the directors, and boasted that she could be ready to appear on the stage in a week if necessary; Porpora, of course, ardently desiring that Consuelo should obtain an engagement, both for her own sake and for that of his opera, which he hoped to get accepted through her instrumentality.

Consuelo, on the other hand, knew not how to resolve. To make an engagement would long defer the possibility of her union with Albert, would spread fear and consternation among the Rudolstadt, who certainly did not expect that she would reappear on the stage; but on the other hand to refuse, was to destroy the last hope of Porpora—to give him another instance of that ingratitude from which he had suffered so deeply, in short, to deal him the last blow. Frightened and annoyed by these two alternatives, she became melancholy and although the strength of her constitution preserved her from any very serious indisposition, she was languid, low, and feverish, and often wished, as she sat shivering over the meagre fire, that a severe illness would solve the question, and spare her the responsibility of deciding.

In the meantime, Porpora's temper, which had expanded during those few days of brief sunshine, became gloomy, morose and unquiet so soon as he saw Consuelo, on whose efforts alone he depended, fall into dejection and irresolution.

After often vainly endeavoring to bring the maestro to converse with her reasonably in regard to love and marriage, and finding that he could not endure even to hear of it, she at length resigned herself to her fate, never mentioned the name of Albert, and held herself ready at any moment to sign whatever engagement Porpora should make for her. When she was alone with Joseph, however, she would often seek a solace by opening her heart to him; and complaining of the strange nature of her destiny, which seemed, as it were, to compel her to sacrifice all the hopes, all the promptings of her heart, all her hopes of enjoying domestic happiness herself, and giving happiness to others, to the sterile pursuit of art—turning all her best feelings, her pity, her sympathy, her love of others, which she was thus compelled to immolate, into punishment and torture."

"Were I you," said Haydn, "my poor Consuelo, I can only say that I would listen to the voice of my genius, and stifle that of my heart. But I know you now, and I know that you cannot do it."

"No, I cannot, Joseph—and I feel that I never shall be able to do it. But see my misfortune—see how strangely my lot is complicated—do what I may, devote myself as I will, I cannot consecrate myself to one but I must abandon the other."

Then they fell into a long discussion as to the possibility of recon-

elling Porpora to the marriage, on the one hand, and prevailing upon him to abandon the prosecution of his art for the public, to leave the city, and dwell at ease in his old age with his adopted daughter and his son-in-law, at the castle of the Giants? But it was too evident to bear an argument, that the artistic independence, the high pride and haughty spirit of the old musician would revolt from the alternative, and reject the offer as an insult, or, if he should try it for a few months, would get disgusted, and give it up immediately.

On the other hand, to think of introducing Count Albert into the follies and frivolities of artist life in Vienna, would, with his peculiarities of manners and aspect, be even more impossible; it appeared, therefore, that there was nothing to do but to resign herself, and let matters take their course.

In the meantime, Consuelo and Joseph applied themselves steadily to increasing the comforts of the maestro.

The furniture of his room was renovated, his wardrobe was entirely replaced, with so much skill and tact, that the maestro never discovered it, or if at any time suspected, he was easily diverted from it by some stratagem of Consuelo, who pretended constantly to be engaged in repairing his old clothes.

"Come, come," said he one day, when he caught her mending a waistcoat, "enough of this folly. An artist cannot be a workwoman, and I will not see you sitting here bent double with a needle in your hand all day. Do you want to damn me?"

"You need not begin damning yourself, master," said Consuelo "for my voice has come back to me."

"Has it?" replied the maestro. "Then you shall sing to-day before her Highness the Countess of Hoditz, Margravine of Bareith."

CHAPTER LXXXV.

THE dowager Margravine of Bareith, widow of the Margrave George William, born Princess of Saxe Weisenfeld, and afterward Countess of Hoditz, "had been," as men said, "lovely as an angel." But she was so much changed that it was necessary to study her features in order to discover even the relics of beauty. She was tall, and showed that she must once have had a fine figure; in fact, she had caused the death of several children by procuring abortions, in order to the preservation of that very figure. Her face was very long, as was her nose also, and having been at some time frozen, which imparted to it the color of beet root, it by no means improved her personal appearance. Her eyes, long accustomed to exert authority, were large, well cut, and of a deep brown hue, but they were so much clouded that they had lost much of their vivacity. As she had no natural eyebrows, she wore false ones—very thick, and as black as ink. Her mouth, although large, was exquisitely formed, and had a most agreeable expression. Her teeth, as white as ivory, were perfectly regular; her complexion, though smooth and regular, was yellowish, dead and lifeless-looking. Her air would have been good but for its affectation. She was the *Lais* of her century; but it was by her personal appearance only that she had charmed, for as to wit, she had not so much as a shadow of it."

If this portrait appear to be drawn by too severe and cynical a hand, it does not come, dear reader, from the pen of your author. It is, word for word, the composition of a princess celebrated for her misfortunes, her domestic virtues, her pride, and her malice—the Princess Wilhelmina, of Prussia, sister of Frederick the Great, wife of the hereditary prince, of the Margrave of Bareith, the nephew of our Countess Hoditz. She was certainly the greatest scandal-monger that ever came of royal blood. But her portraits are for the most part drawn with a master hand, and it is difficult, as you read them, not to believe them correct.

When Consuelo, with her hair dressed by Keller, and attired, thanks to his care and zeal, with elegant simplicity, was introduced into the margravine's drawing-room, she placed herself by Porpora's side, in the rear of a harpsichord, which had been set obliquely across an angle of the room, so as to be in the way of no person. No one had arrived as yet, so punctual was Porpora, and the servants had just done lighting the lamps. The maestro began to amuse himself by trying the piano, and had scarcely elicited a few sounds from it before a very handsome lady entered the room, and came up to him with much affability and grace. As Porpora bowed to her with the utmost respect, and addressed her as princess, Consuelo took her for the margravine, and, according to usage, kissed her hand. The cold, wan hand which she had taken pressed that of the young artist with such cordiality as is rarely exhibited by the great, and Consuelo's affections were gained on the instant. The princess appeared to be about thirty years of age; her form was elegant without being correct, and certain faults might be observed in it, which seemed to be the result of physical sufferings. The expression of her face was admirable; but she was so lamentably pale, and showed such traces of overpowering grief, that her charms were all prematurely faded.

Her dress was exquisite, but simple and decorous, almost to the verge of severity. A character of kindness, modesty, and sadness was legible in every feature of her fine face, and the sound of her voice had something in it so tender and so touching, that Consuelo was deeply affected.

Before she had found time, however, to convince herself that this was not the margravine, the real margravine made her appearance. She had at this time passed her fiftieth year, and if the portrait affixed to the head of this chapter, which had been written ten years, was then a little overcharged, it was certainly so no longer when Consuelo saw her. It now needed indeed a large stock of credulity and good-nature to believe that the Countess Hoditz had been one of the beauties of Germany, although she was dressed and painted to the acme of skill and coquetry. The rotundity of advanced years had ruined the figure, concerning which, it would seem, that the margravine still cherished strange illusions, for her bare shoulders and bust were displayed as proudly as though they still possessed the symmetry of an antique statue. Her head was dressed with flowers, feathers, and diamonds, like that of a young woman, and her dress was one blaze of jewelry.

"Mamma," said the princess, who had caused Consuelo's error, "this is the young lady whom Maestro Porpora promised to introduce to us, and who is about to give us the pleasure of hearing the fine music of his new opera."

"That is no reason," replied the Margravine, measuring Consuelo

from head to foot, "why you should hold her by the hand. Go, and take a seat near the harpsichord, mademoiselle; I am very glad to see you; you will sing to us when the company shall arrive. I make you my salutations, Master Porpora; but you must pardon me, if I seem to neglect you, for I see that something is wanting to my toilet. My daughter, talk a little to Master Porpora, he is a man of talent whom I esteem."

Having uttered these words, with a voice as hoarse as that of a common soldier, the margravine turned heavily on her heel, and returned to her own apartments. Scarcely had she disappeared before the princess, her daughter, returned to Consuelo, and took her hand again, with delicate and touching kindness, as if to assure her that she, at least had no sympathy with her mother's impertinence; then she entered into conversation with her and Porpora, and manifested an interest in her, full, at once, of simplicity and grace. Consuelo was the more moved by this courtesy and kindness that, when several persons had been introduced, she remarked a degree of coldness, and a reserve, half timid and half haughty, in the manners of the princess, which she had evidently laid aside in her conduct toward herself and the maestro. When the saloon was nearly full, the Count Hoditz, who had dined abroad, entered the drawing-room in full dress; and, as if he had been a stranger in his own house, went up and kissed the hand of his noble wife, with an air of the greatest respect, and enquired after her health; for the margravine affected to be exceedingly delicate, lay half extended on her sofa, smelling, every moment, some sovereign remedy against vapors, and receiving the homage of her guests with an air which she intended to be languishing, but which was only disdainful. In fact she was so consummately ridiculous, that Consuelo, who was at first irritated and indignant at her insolence, at last began to be amused at her expense, and to plan a merry laugh as she should describe her to Beppo.

"The princess had drawn near to the harpsichord, and never missed an opportunity of addressing a word or a smile to Consuelo, whenever she could do so without attracting the attention of her mother. This situation gave Consuelo an opportunity of witnessing a little domestic by-play, which gave her, in some sort, the key to what was passing in the menage. Count Hoditz approached his daughter-in-law, took her hand, raised it to his lips, and held it there for some time, with an expressive look. The princess withdrew her hand, and spoke a few coldly deferential words to him. The count did not listen to them, but still gazing on her eagerly, "What! my fair angel," he said, "always sad, always austere, always cuirassèd to the chin! One would suppose you were going to turn nun."

"It is very possible," replied the princess, in a low voice, "that I may end by doing so. The world has not so treated me as to give me any deep attachment to its pleasures."

"The world would adore you and would be at your feet, if you did not affect to hold it at a distance. And as to the cloister, how can you dream of such a horror, at your age, and with your beauty?"

"At a much more smiling age, and with beauty which I possess no longer, I endured the horror of a far more rigorous captivity. Have you forgotten it?—But speak to me no longer, Monsieur le Comte, for mamma is looking at you."

As she spoke, the Count started away from his daughter-in-law as if he had been touched by a spring, and drew near to Consuelo, to

whom he bowed very gravely. Then having spoken a few words to her, *en amateur*, concerning music in general, he opened the music book which Porpora had laid on the harpsichord, and pretending to be looking for some particular piece which he wished her to explain to him, leaned over the desk and thus addressed her in a very low voice. "I saw the deserter yesterday morning," he said, "and his wife delivered a note to me. I request the fair Consuelo to forget a certain meeting, and in return for her silence, I will forget a certain Joseph whom I have just seen in my antechamber."

"That certain Joseph," replied Consuelo, whom the discovery of the jealousies and conjugal constraints of the family rendered very secure concerning the results of the meeting at Passau, "is an artist of great talents, who will not remain long in an antechamber. He is my companion, my friend, almost my brother—I have nothing to blush at, nothing which I wish to conceal on that head; and all that I have to ask of the generosity of your lordship is a little indulgence for my voice, and a little protection for Joseph on his future debut on a musical career."

"My interest is secured to the said Joseph, as my admiration is already secured to your beautiful voice, but I flatter myself that a certain jest on my part was never supposed to be serious."

"I never had the folly to suppose it so, Monsieur le Comte; besides which, I well know, that a woman has no reason to be vain of being made the subject of a jest of that nature."

"That is enough, signora," said the count, of whom the dowager never lost sight for a moment, and who was now anxious to choose another listener, in order to avoid giving her umbrage. "The celebrated Consuelo should know how to pardon something to the gaiety of a journey in pleasant society, and she may count in future on the respect and devotion of Count Hoditz."

He replaced the music-book on the piano, and advanced obsequiously to receive a person who had been just announced, with the most pompous respect. He was a little man, who looked like a woman in disguise, so rosy was he, so curled, so perfumed, so delicate, and so graceful; it was he of whom Maria Theresa used to say, that she should like to have him set in a ring; it was he of whom she also said, that she had made a diplomatist, because she could make nothing better of him. He was the plenipotentiary of Austria, the first minister, the favorite—some went so far as to say the lover of the empress; he was, in a word, no other than the illustrious Kaunitz, who held in his white hand, glittering with its many-colored ornament of rings, all the puissant clues of European policy.

He seemed to be listening very gravely to persons who affected to be grave, and who were struggling to entertain him with grave topics; but on a sudden he interrupted himself to ask Count Hoditz, "Who is that, whom I see there at the harpsichord? Is that the little girl they spoke to me about—Porpora's protégée? That poor devil, Porpora! I wish I could do something for him; but he is so exacting and so fantastical that all the artists fear or hate him. When one speaks of him to them, it is to show them the head of Medusa. He tells one that he sings false—another that his music is worthless—a third that he owes all his success to intrigue—and then, he expects while using this Huron language, that people will listen to him, and do him justice. What the devil we don't live in the woods. Frankness is out of fashion, and we can no longer lead men by the truth. She is not

so bad, however, that little thing; I like her face. She is very young, is she not? They say she had great success at Venice. Porpora must bring her to me to-morrow."

"He is very anxious," said the princess, "that you should obtain her a hearing from the empress, and I hope you will not refuse him that favor. Indeed, I ask it of you on my own account."

"There is nothing easier than to obtain her a hearing from her majesty, and the desire of your highness is enough that I should procure it for her. But there is a person far more influential than her majesty, at the Imperial Theatre, and that is Madame Tesi. Even if her majesty were to take this girl under her protection, I cannot say that her engagement would be signed without the supreme approbation of Madame Tesi."

"They say that it is you, Monsieur le Comte, who ruin all these ladies horribly, and that were it not for your indulgence, they would not have so much power."

"What would you have, princess? Every one is master in his own house. Her majesty understands that were she to interfere by her imperial decree in the affairs of the opera, the opera would go all wrong. Now, her majesty is anxious that the opera should go on well, and that the people should be amused. How can this be brought to pass, if the prima donna has a cold on the very day when she is to appear, or if the tenor, instead of throwing himself into the arms of the basso in the middle of a fine scene of reconciliation, hits him a blow with his fist under the ear? We have enough to do to manage Caffariello's whims, and are very well pleased that Madame Tesi and Madame Holzbaüer contrive to keep good friends. If we cast an apple of discord on the stage, we shall be worse off than ever."

"But a third woman is indispensably necessary," said the Venetian ambassador, who warmly protected Porpora and his pupil, "and her offer is an admirable one."

"If she be admirable, so much the worse for her. She will make Madame Tesi jealous, who is admirable, and wishes to be the only one who is so; and she will make Madame Holzbaüer furious, who wishes to be admirable also, and who——"

"Is not," said the ambassador dryly.

"She is well born; she comes of a very respectable family," said M. de Kaunitz shrewdly.

"For all that she cannot sing two parts at once. She certainly must let the mezzo-soprano have her share in the opera."

"We have a Corilla, who has just offered herself, who is by far the handsomest creature in the world."

"Has your excellency seen her already?"

"On the very day of her arrival. But I have not yet heard her; she was sick."

"You shall hear this girl; and you will not hesitate when they have both been heard, to give her the preference."

"It is very possible. I even confess to you that her face, though less handsome than that of the other, is yet more agreeable to me. She has an amiable and modest expression; but my preference will do her no good, poor thing. She cannot please Madame Tesi without displeasing Madame Holzbaüer; and hitherto, in spite of the very tender friendship which exists between these two ladies, whatever has been approved by the one has always had the fortune to be bitterly opposed by the other.

"This is a perilous crisis, then, and an affair of the gravest importance," said the princess with an affectation of seriousness, as she noticed the weight which these two statesmen attributed to the intrigues of the green-room. "Here is our poor little protégée in the scales against Madame Corilla; and I would lay a wager that Monsieur Caffariello will cast his sword into the balance, on one side or the other."

When Consuelo had sung, there was but one voice declaring that, since Madame Hasse, nothing had been heard that could compare with her; and Monsieur de Kaunitz, coming up to her, said in a solemn voice, "Mademoiselle, you sing better than Madame Tesi; but let this be said to you here by all of us in confidence; for if such a judgment should go abroad concerning you, you are ruined for ever; and you will not make your appearance this year in Vienna. Have prudence then, very much prudence," he added, lowering his voice as he sat down beside her. "You have to struggle against great obstacles, and you will only triumph by dint of tact." And therewith entering into the thousand ramifications of theatrical intrigue, and putting her fully in possession of the course of all the petty rivalries and manœuvres of companies, the great Kaunitz delivered himself of a whole treatise in her favor of the diplomatic science, after the fashion of the green-room.

Consuelo listened to him with her great eyes wide open, with wonder; and when he had finished speaking, as he had said at least twenty times, "*My opera*," and "the opera which *I* produced last month," she fancied that she must have been mistaken when he was announced, and that this person who appeared to be so thoroughly versed in all the arcanæ of the dramatic career, could be no other than the director of some opera, or some fashionable music-master. She therefore became perfectly at her ease with him, and talked to him as she would have done to one of her own profession. His freedom from restraint rendered her much more artless, and much merrier than strict etiquette would have permitted her to be with a person of such dominant position as the prime minister. Monsieur de Kaunitz was charmed with her, and amused himself talking with her for above an hour. The margravine was greatly scandalized at such an infraction of propriety; for accustomed as she was to the dull and solemn formalities of small courts, she detested the liberty of large ones. But she had no longer the power of playing the margravine, for in truth she was a margravine no longer, and was only tolerated and received by the empress because she had abjured the Lutheran and adopted the Roman Catholic religion. Thanks to this act of hypocrisy, all breaches of decorum, all improprieties of intermarriage, nay, even all crimes, could meet with pardon at the court of Austria; and Maria Theresa, in this respect, followed the example which her father and mother had set her, of receiving any person whomsoever, provided he was desirous of escaping the rebuffs and scorns of Protestant Germany, by taking refuge within the pale of the Romish church. But, all princess and Catholic as she was, the margravine was nobody at Vienna, and Monsieur de Kaunitz was everything.

As soon as Consuelo had sung her third piece, Porpora, who knew all the fashions of the time, made her a sign, rolled up his music, and made his retreat with her through a small side door, without disturbing any of the great personages who had deigned to open their ears to her divine accents.

"All is going well," said he, rubbing his hands together, as soon as they were in the street, escorted by Joseph, carrying their flambeau.

"Kaunitz is an old dolt who knows what he is about, and who will give you a good lift."

"And who is Kaunitz?" asked Consuelo, "I have not seen him."

"You have not seen him, you little blunderhead! why he talked to you for an hour."

"Surely, you do not mean that gentleman with the pink and silver waistcoat, who told me such a pack of old wife stories that I took him for some old box-keeper."

"That is the very man. What is there so wonderful in that?"

"For my part, I think it is very wonderful," replied Consuelo; "and 't was not the idea I had formed of a statesman."

"That is because you do not see how states are conducted. If you could only see that, you would think it very surprising indeed if statesmen were anything else than old women. But come, silence on all such subjects as this, and let us, for our part, endeavor to perform our business through this masquerade of the world."

CHAPTER LXXXVI.

A FEW days after this, Porpora, having bestirred himself amazingly, and intrigued very extensively after his fashion, that is to say, by threatening, scolding, and taunting every one to the right and left, Consuelo was conducted to the imperial chapel by Master Reuter, the former master and former enemy of young Haydn, and sang in the presence of Maria Theresa, the part of Judith, in the opera of *Betulia liberata*, the poetry by Metastasio, and the music by Reuter himself. Consuelo was magnificent; and Maria Theresa deigned to be very well satisfied. When the sacred concert was ended, Consuelo was invited with the other singers, Caffariello being one of the number, to pass into one of the saloons of the palace, to partake of a collation, at which Reuter presided. She had scarcely taken her seat between that master and Porpora when sounds, at once hurried and solemn, were heard coming from the gallery beyond, which caused all the guests to start, with the exception of Consuelo and Caffariello, who were engaged in an animated discussion on a movement in a certain chorus, which the one would have more lively, and the other slower.

"The master himself," said Consuelo, turning toward Reuter, "can decide that question; but Reuter was no longer at her right, nor Porpora at her left; every one had risen from the table, and were arranged in a line, with an expression of the profoundest reverence. Consuelo found herself face to face with a woman of about thirty years, handsome and still full of energy and freshness, dressed in black, which was the chapel costume, and accompanied by seven children, one of whom she held by the hand. He was the heir to the throne, the young Cæsar, Joseph II., and that handsome woman with the easy bearing, the affable yet imposing demeanor, was Maria Theresa.

"Is this *la Guiditta*?" the empress inquired of Reuter. I am very much pleased with you, my child," she added, examining Consuelo from head to foot; "you have given me, in truth, real pleasure, and

never have I better appreciated the sublimity of our admirable poet's verse than now, in your harmonious mouth. You pronounce perfectly well, and that is a point to which I attach a great deal. How old are you, mademoiselle? You are a Venetian, are you not? a pupil of the famous Porpora, whom I see here with much interest? You are desirous of an engagement in the court theatre? You are made to shine there-resplendent; and Monsieur de Kaunitz protects you."

Having questioned Consuelo thus, without giving her an opportunity of replying, and looking by turns at Kaunitz and at Metastasio, who accompanied her, Maria Theresa made a sign to one of her chamberlains, who presented a very rich bracelet to Consuelo. Before she had so much as thought of answering or thanking her, the empress had already traversed the hall, and had withdrawn from her eyes the splendor of the imperial brow. She had retired with her royal bevy of princes and archduchesses, addressing a gracious and favorable word to each one of the musicians who were within reach of her, and leaving behind her, as it were, a luminous wake, dazzling the eyes of all beholders with the brightness of her glory and her power.

Caffariello was the only one who retained, or affected to retain, his self-possession. He resumed his discussion with Consuelo at the very point where it had been interrupted; and Consuelo, putting the bracelet into her pocket, without so much as thinking to look at it, began to argue with him again, to the great astonishment and scandal of the other musicians, who, prostrated before the fascination of the imperial vision, did not conceive it possible to think of anything else during the whole of that day. There is no need that we should say that Porpora formed a solitary exception, both instinctively and systematically, to that rage of self-humiliation. He knew how it was proper to show their suitable reverence to crowned heads; but, in the bottom of his heart he scorned and despised slaves. Master Reuter, whom Caffariello addressed concerning the true movement of the chorus in dispute, kept his lips hypocritically closed; and after having suffered himself to be questioned several times, at last replied very coldly, "I confess to you, monsieur, that I am not with you in your conversation. When Maria Theresa is before my eyes, I forget the whole world; and long after she has disappeared, I remain under the influence of an emotion which does not permit me to think of myself."

"Mademoiselle does not appear to be bewildered by the distinguished honor which she has drawn down upon us," said Monsieur Holzbaüer, who was present, and whose self-abasement had something more sustained than that of Reuter. "It seems to be an every day matter to you, signora, to talk with crowned heads: one would say you had done nothing else all your life."

"I never spoke to any crowned head in my life," replied Consuelo, quietly, who would not notice Holzbaüer's insinuations; "and her majesty did not afford me the honor of doing so, for she seemed, while addressing me, to forbid me the honor, or to spare me the trouble of replying to her."

"You would have wished, then, to enter into conversation with the empress," said Porpora, with a jesting expression.

"I never wished such a thing at all," replied Consuelo, inartificially.

"That is because mademoiselle is, it appears, heedless rather than ambitious," said Reuter, with icy disdain.

"Master Reuter," said Consuelo confidently and candidly, "are

you dissatisfied with the manner in which I have sung your music?" Reuter was compelled to admit that no one could have sung it better, even under the reign of the august and ever-to-be-regretted Charles IV. "In that case," said Consuelo, "do not reproach me with heedlessness. I have the ambition to satisfy my masters. I have the ambition to perform the duties of my profession well; and what other ambition should I have? what other would not be ridiculous and misplaced on my part?"

"You are too modest, mademoiselle," resumed Holzbaüer. "There is no ambition too vast for talents such as yours."

"I take that for a compliment dictated by your gallantry," replied Consuelo; but I shall not believe that you are really pleased with me, until the day when you shall invite me to sing at the court theatre."

Holzbaüer, who was fairly caught, in spite of all his prudence, affected a fit of coughing, in order to spare himself the necessity of speaking, and got himself out of the scrape by a very respectful and courteous bow. Then bringing back the conversation to its original ground—"You are really," he said, "the calmest and most disinterested person I ever heard of. You have not even looked at the handsome bracelet of which her majesty has made you a present."

"Oh! that is true!" said Consuelo, drawing it from her pocket, and passing it to her neighbors, who were anxious to see and value it. "It will be something wherewith to buy wood for the master's stove, in case I should fail to get any engagement this winter," thought Consuelo within herself. A very trivial pension would have been of far more use to us than dresses and ornaments."

"How heavenly is her majesty's beauty," said Reuter, with a sigh of deep feeling, casting an ill-natured sidelong glance at Consuelo.

"Yes, she seemed to me to be very handsome," answered the young girl, who did not understand the nudges which Porpora kept giving her.

"She seemed to you," said Reuter. "You are difficult to please."

"I had scarcely time to look at her, she passed so quickly."

"But her dazzling genius! the intellect which is displayed at every word which issues from her lips!"

"I had so little time to hear her, and she said so little!"

"Truly, mademoiselle, you must be of brass or adamant; I know not what there is that can move you."

"I was much moved while singing your Judith," said Consuelo, who knew how to be sharp when she pleased, and who now began to perceive the ill-will of the Viennese masters towards her.

"That girl has wit, under all the simplicity of her manner," said Holzbaüer to Master Reuter. "But it is of Porpora's own school, all scorn and mockery."

"If we do not look out, old-fashioned recitative and the antiquated style will take the field against us more victoriously than of yore," replied Reuter. "But be not disturbed, I have a method for preventing this *Porporintallerie* from raising its voice."

When they were all rising from table, Caffariello said to Consuelo, in her ear, "Do you see, my child, all these people are mere gutter sweepings. You will have a good deal of trouble before you will be able to do any thing here; they are all against you. They would be against me if they dared."

"And what have we done to them?" asked Consuelo, in astonishment.

We are both pupils of the greatest singing master in the world. They and their creatures are our natural enemies. They will indispose Maria Theresa towards you; and every word you have uttered here will be repeated to her, with malicious amplifications. She will be told that you said she is not handsome, and that you considered her gift mean and trivial. I know all their tricks. Take courage, however, I will protect you, and I believe that the judgment of Caffariello in music is worth at least as much as that of Maria Theresa."

"Between the malice of the one party, and the absurdity of the other," said Consuelo to herself, as she retired, "I am nicely compromised. Oh, Porpora," said she, "I will do my utmost to obtain re-engagement in the theatre. Oh, Albert! I hope that I shall fail to do so!"

On the following day, Porpora having business in town all day, and thinking that Consuelo was somewhat pale, he requested her to take a drive out of town to the Spinnerin am Kreutz, with Keller's wife, who had offered to accompany her whenever she desired it. As soon as the maestro had gone out, "Beppo," said the young girl, "go quickly out and hire a little carriage, and let us both go and see Angela, and thank the canon. We promised to do so before; but my cold must be my excuse."

"And in what costume will you present yourself to the canon?" asked Beppo.

"In this which I wear," she replied. "The canon must learn who I am, and receive me in my true form."

"Excellent canon, I quite look forward to seeing him again."

"And I also."

"And yet, it almost vexes me to think—to think—"

"To think what?"

"That his head will now be turned altogether."

"And at what, I pray you? Am I a goddess? for I never imagined it."

"Consuelo, remember that he was three parts crazy about you when we left him."

"I tell you," she replied, "that it will be that he shall know me to be a woman, and see me as I am, to give him back all his command over himself, and to become again that which God made him—a reasonable man."

"It is true that the dress has something to do. Thus, when I saw you here transformed into a young lady, after being in the habit for a fortnight of treating you as a boy, I experienced I know not what of fear, of constraint, for which I could not account to myself; and it is certain that during our journey, if I had been permitted to fall in love with you—but you will say that I am talking nonsense——"

"Certainly, you are talking nonsense, Joseph, and what is more, you are losing time in gossiping. We have ten leagues to pass in going to and returning from the priory. It is now eight in the morning, and we must be back at seven this evening to sup with the maestro."

Three hours after this, Beppo and his companion descended from their carriage at the door of the priory. It was a lovely day, but the canon was looking at his flowers with a mournful aspect. When he saw Joseph he uttered a cry of joy, and hurried to meet him; but he stood stupefied on recognising his favorite Bertoni in the dress of a woman.

"Bertoni, my beloved child," he exclaimed, with a sort of pious

frankness, "what means this disguise, and wherefore do you come to see me transfigured thus? It is not carnival times."

"My most revered friend," said Consuelo, kissing his hand; "your reverence must pardon me for having deceived you—Bertoni never existed, and when I had the honor to meet you I was really in disguise."

"We thought," said Joseph, who feared to see the consternation of the canon turn into disgust, "that your reverence was not deceived by the innocent deceit. It was not a trick played off upon you, but a necessity imposed on us by circumstances, and we believed that your reverence had the kindness and delicacy to lend yourself to it."

"And did you believe this?" asked the canon, alarmed and thunderstruck; "you too, Bertoni—I would say, mademoiselle—did you believe this?"

"No, Monsieur Canon," replied Consuelo; "I never believed it for a moment. I saw perfectly that your reverence had not the slightest suspicion of the truth."

"And you do me justice," said the canon, in a tone which was in sort stern, yet deeply dejected; "I do not know how to feign, and had I suspected your sex, I certainly should not have insisted, as I did, on persuading you to stay with me. There was, indeed, a vague report—a suspicion which made me smile—in the neighboring village, and even among my own people, so obstinately did I self-deceive myself on your account. They said that one of the young musicians who sang on the patron-saint's day of the village, was a woman in disguise. But then it was replied, that this was a piece of Gottlieb's spite, to annoy and alarm the curate. In a word, I actually contradicted that report myself, to the utmost. You see that I was completely your dupe, and that we will take care not to be so again."

"There was much misapprehension," replied Consuelo, with the assurance of real dignity; "but there was no dupe, Monsieur Canon. I do not think I even overstepped for one moment the limits of the respect I owe you, and the proprieties which honor imposes. I was travelling on the road by night, with no place where I might lodge; I was worn out with fatigue and thirst, after a long day's travel on foot. You would not have refused your hospitality to a mere beggar. You granted it to me in the name of music, and in music I discharged my debt to you. If I did not set off without regard to your wishes on the next morning, it is because unforeseen circumstances occurred which dictated to me duties superior to all others. My enemy, my rival, my persecutress fell, as it were, from the clouds at your door, destitute and devoid of help; she had a right to my cares and my assistance. Your reverence must needs remember the rest; you well know that if I profited by your goodness, it was not for my own advantage. You know that I went my own way so soon as my duty was accomplished; and if I return to-day to thank you in person for the goodness with which you have overwhelmed me, it is because honor made it my duty myself to undeceive you, and to furnish you with those explanations which are necessary to our mutual dignity."

"There is something very extraordinary and very mysterious in all this," said the canon, half conquered. "You say that the miserable woman whose child I have adopted, is your enemy—your rival. Who are you then, yourself, Bertoni? Pardon me, if that name keeps returning to my lips, and tell me what I am to call you in future."

"I am called the Porporina," replied Consuelo; "I am a pupil of Porpora—a cantatrice, and attached to the theatre."

"Ah! it is well!" said the canon with a deep sigh. "I ought to have guessed it from the manner in which you played your part; and, as regards your prodigious talent for music, I am no longer surprised. You have been brought up in an excellent school. May I ask whether Beppo is your brother or your husband?"

"Neither the one nor the other. He is my brother by adoption, no more, Monsieur Canon; and if my soul had not felt itself to be as chaste and spotless as your own, I had not sullied the sanctity of your dwelling by my presence."

Consuelo had, to speak the truth, an irresistible accent; and the canon felt its power, as all pure and upright souls ever feel the power of sincerity. He felt, as it were, consoled beneath a weight of woe; and as he walked slowly between his two young proteges, he questioned Consuelo with a sweetness and renewed affection, which she gradually ceased to resist, even in imagination. She related to him rapidly, though without mentioning names, the principal circumstances of her life; her betrothal with Anzoletto beside her mother's death-bed; his infidelity; the hatred of Corilla; the infamous designs of Zustiniani, and her departure from Venice; the attachment which Count Albert had formed for her; the offers of the family of Rudolstadt; her own hesitation; her flight from the Giants' Castle; her meeting with Joseph Haydn; her journey; her fright and compassion by Corilla's bed-side; her gratitude for the protection granted by the canon to Anzoletto's child; and, to conclude, her return to Vienna, and even the interview she had had with Maria Theresa. Joseph had never till this moment heard the whole of Consuelo's history. She had never spoken to him of Anzoletto, and the few words which she now let fall concerning her by-gone love for that worthless wretch made but slight impression on him; but her generosity toward Corilla, and her solicitude for the child, moved him so deeply that he turned away to conceal his tears. The canon could not restrain his own. The narrative of Consuelo—concise, energetic, and sincere—produced the same effect on him as the reading of a fine romance would have done, but he had never read a romance, and this was the first romantic tale which had ever in his life initiated in him the lively emotions which we derive from the adventures of others. He had seated himself on a turf bank, in order to listen the more at his ease, and when the young girl ceased, he cried out—"If this be true, as I am satisfied it is, you are a pure and holy girl—you are a St. Cecilia, returned to this world."

"Now, Monsieur Canon," said Consuelo rising, "tell me the news of Angela before I take my leave of your reverence."

"Angela is very well, and comes on wonderfully," replied the canon. "My gardener's wife takes great care of her, and I see her constantly giving her the air in the garden. She will grow among the flowers, like another flower under my eyes; and when the time shall be come to make a Christian soul of her, I will not stint its cultivation. Repose that trust in me, my children. What I have promised in the face of heaven that will I religiously perform. It seems, madam, that her mother will not dispute this care with us; for although she is no farther off than at Vienna, she has not once sent to ask for tidings of her daughter."

"She may have done so indirectly, and without your hearing of it," answered Consuelo. "I cannot believe that a mother is indifferent on such a point. But Corilla is struggling for an engagement at the

Court Theatre; she knows that her Majesty is very strict on the point of morals, and never grants her protection to persons of questionable repute. It is her interest to conceal her faults, at least until her engagement has been signed. Let us, therefore, keep her secret.'

"And yet she is opposing you to the utmost!" cried Joseph; "and they say she will carry the day through her intrigues—that she is defaming you throughout the city, and that she represents you everywhere as the mistress of Zustiniani. This has been spoken of at the embassy. Keller told me so. They were very indignant there, but feared that she would persuade Monsieur de Kaunitz, who is very fond of such gossip as that, and never ceases from praising the beauty of Corilla."

"She has said such things of me!" cried Consuelo, blushing with indignation; but then she added, calmly, "it was, however, sure to be so; I ought to have expected it."

"But there is but one word needed to overthrow all her calumnies, and that word I will utter," said Joseph. "I will proclaim that——"

"You will proclaim nothing, Beppo; it would be a piece of cowardice, of barbarity. You will not mention it either, Monsieur Canon, and if I had wished to do so, you would have prevented me, would you not?"

"A truly evangelical soul!" cried the canon. "But consider, pray, that this secret cannot, by its nature, be preserved for any very long time. It will be sufficient that my servant, or any peasant of all those that know the facts, should utter one word, and it will be made public that the chaste Corilla has been brought to a bed of a child without a father, and that she has abandoned it into the bargain."

"Within a fortnight either Corilla or I shall have obtained an engagement. I would not carry the day over her by an act of vengeance. Until that time, Beppo, silence, or I withdraw from you both my esteem and friendship. And now adieu, Monsieur le Canon; tell me that you pardon me—give me once more your paternal hand—and I withdraw before your people have recognised my features in this garb."

"My people may say what they please, and my benefice may go to the devil, if it be agreeable to heaven so to dispose of it. I have received of late a little inheritance, which gives me courage to brave the thunders of the ordinary. Therefore, my children, do not mistake me for a saint; I am tired of obeying, and of being constrained on all sides; I choose to live straightforwardly, and to have done with childish fears. Since I have no longer Bridget's sceptre at my elbow, and still more, since I feel that I have an independent fortune, I feel myself as brave as a lion. Now, then, come and breakfast with me; we will baptize Angela afterward, and then we will have music till dinner time."

He hurried them into the priory, and called aloud to his valets as he entered, "Here, Andrew, Joseph, come and see Signor Bertoni metamorphosed into a lady. You would not have expected that, hey? No, nor I either. Well, make haste and get over your surprise, and set covers for us as quickly as you can."

The repast was exquisite, and our young people speedily perceived that if certain grave changes had been worked in the character of the worthy canon, it was not in reference to his appreciation of good cheer. The child was then carried into the chapel of the priory. The canon laid aside his doublet, and putting on his cassock and surplice,

performed the ceremony. Consuelo and Joseph filled the stations of god-father and god-mother, and the name of Angela was confirmed to the little girl. The rest of the afternoon was devoted to music, and then followed the leave-taking. The canon was mortified at his inability to detain his friends to dinner, but he yielded to their arguments, and consoled himself with the idea of seeing them often in Vienna, where he proposed to come and spend a portion of the winter. While they were harnessing the carriage, he led them to the hot-house, in order to make them admire some new plants, with which he had enriched his collection. The day was closing, but the canon, all whose senses were highly cultivated, had made but a few steps under the crystal roof of his transparent palace, when he cried out, "I discover here an extraordinary perfume. Can the vanilla-scented *gladislus* have flowered? But no, it is not the aroma of my *gladislus*. The *strelitzas* are scentless; the perfume of the *cyclamens* is less pure and less penetrating than this. What can have happened here? If my *volkameria* were not dead, I should think that this was it. Alas! poor plant! I will think of it no more!"

But on a sudden the good canon gave a great start, and uttered a cry of surprise and admiration as he saw, standing before him in a large tub, the finest *volkameria* he had ever beheld in all his life, all covered with clusters of little white roses, centred with pink, the sweet perfume of which filled the whole hot-house, and overpowered all the commoner odors which reigned around it.

"Is this a prodigy? Whence is this foretaste of Paradise—this flower from the garden of Beatrice?" he exclaimed, in a poetic rapture.

"We have brought it hither in our carriage, with all care imaginable," said Consuelo. "Permit us to offer it to you in reparation of a horrible imprecation which escaped my lips on a certain day, and which I shall repent so long as I live."

"Oh! my dear daughter, what a gift!—and with what delicacy is it not offered! Oh! beloved *volkameria*, you shall have a particular name, such as I am in the habit of giving to the most splendid individuals of my collections. You shall be called Bertoni, in order to consecrate the memory of a being who exists no longer, but whom I yet loved with the affection of a father."

"Nay, good father," said Consuelo, pressing his hand, "you ought to accustom yourself to love your daughters as much as your sons. Angela is not a boy."

"And la Porporina is my daughter also," said the canon. "Yes, my daughter—my daughter," he repeated, looking alternately at Consuelo and the Bertoni *volkameria* with tears in his eyes.

At six o'clock in the evening Consuelo and Joseph had entered their own house; the carriage had set them down at the entrance of their suburb, and nothing betrayed their innocent escapade. Porpora was only astonished that Consuelo had not a better appetite after her drive through the beautiful meadows which surround the capital of the empire, but the canon's breakfast had perhaps rendered Consuelo a little dainty that day; the fine air, however, and the exercise she had taken, secured her a good night's rest, and on the morrow she felt herself in better health and courage than she had been since she arrived at Vienna.

CHAPTER LXXXVII.

AMID the uncertainty of her destiny, Consuelo expecting perhaps to find an excuse or motive in her own heart, determined to write at once to Count Christian of Rudolstadt, to inform him of her relations to Porpora, of the efforts the latter had made to induce her to return to the theatre, and that she hoped yet to be able to disappoint his expectations. She spoke to him in full sincerity, and made a display of all the gratitude, devotion, and submission, which was due her old master. Making him the confidant of all her apprehensions in relation to Albert, she besought him at once to dictate a letter to the latter, the effect of which would be to procure him calm and quiet. She concluded it thus:—"I ask your lordship to grant me time to look into my own heart, and to make up my own mind. I am resolved to keep my word, and can swear before God that I am able to close my heart and mind to every new phantasy and to every new affection. If, though, I return to the theatre, I act in such a manner as to violate every promise, and renounce all hope of being able to keep my obligations; let your lordship judge me, or rather the destiny which compels me and the duty which commands me. From you I expect more than from my own reason. Can it, however, contradict my conscience?"

When this letter was sealed and given to Joseph, Consuelo felt more calm, as always happens when people are in difficulty and are able to gain time or postpone a crisis. She then prepared to pay a visit with Porpora, which he thought most important and decisive, to the much beraised imperial poet, the Abbe Metastasio.

This illustrious personage was then about fifty years of age. His face was handsome, his address was graceful, and his conversation charming. Consuelo would have entertained the greatest sympathy for him, but for the fact that in entering the house the separate stories of which were inhabited by the imperial poet and the wig-maker Keller, she had the following conversation.

"Consuelo, (Porpora speaks,) you are about to see a handsome man, with a keen black eye, a ruddy complexion, and a fresh and smiling lip. He insists on subjecting himself to a slow and dangerous malady. He eats, sleeps, toils, and grows fat, just as any one else does; yet, he feigns to suffer from want of sleep, appetite, debility, and marasmus. Do not be so ignorant, as, when he complains of illness, to tell him that he has none, that he looks well, or any other similar fatuity. He wishes people to pity him, and is unhappy that people do not put on mourning for him before he dies. Do not, though, speak to him of death, or of any one that is dead, for he fears to die. Do not when you leave him, be so stupid as to say:—'I hope when I see you again your health will be better' for he wishes all to think he is dying, and could he persuade others that he is dead he would be too well satisfied, provided always that he were well satisfied himself that he is really alive."

"That is a foolish mania for a great man," said Consuelo. "What can one say, if he will be neither dead nor alive?"

"Speak to him of his disease, ask him a thousand questions, listen to a description of all his sufferings and troubles; and in conclusion say, that he is too careless of himself, that he is too negligent, and works too hard. By talking in this manner we shall win his favor."

"Do we not go to ask him to write a song, music to which you will compose, and which I will sing? How can we at once advise him not to write, and then ask him to write for us?"

"In the course of conversation all this will come right. We have only to arrange matters beforehand."

The maestro wished his pupil to make herself agreeable to the poet. The natural caustic vein of his temperament did not permit him to restrain the ridiculous points of the disposition of others, and he was awkward enough to prepare Consuelo for a rigid examination, and for a perfect contempt which we always feel for those who insist on being flattered and admired. Incapable of adulation and deceit, she suffered when she heard Porpora speak of the poet's distresses and thus cruelly ridicule his imaginary sufferings. Often she blushed and maintained a painful silence in spite of her master's telegraphic efforts to induce her to second him.

The reputation of Consuelo began to be known at Vienna; she had sung in many salons, and her admission into the Italian opera was an hypothesis which not a little agitated all the musical coteries. Metastasio was all powerful; if by flattering his self-esteem Consuelo could induce him to sympathise with her, he would confide to Porpora the task of writing music for *Attilio Regolo*, which he had completed and kept many years in his desk. The pupil then must exert her influence for the master, who did not at all please the imperial poet.

Metastasio was a true Italian, and people of that country are not so easily deceived as some others. He had penetration enough to know Porpora had but a moderate admiration for his dramatic genius, and that more than once (either right or wrong) he had criticised his timidity and his exaggerated sensibility. The icy reserve of Consuelo, the little sympathy she entertained for his sickness, did not seem that they really were the awkwardness respectful pity always inspires. He almost looked on it as an insult, and but for his politeness and knowledge of the world, would have positively refused to hear her sing. After a trifling of some minutes he consented, making an excuse of the excitability of his nerves and his fear of excitement. He had heard Consuelo sing his oratorio of Judith. It was necessary for him to hear her in *scenic* music. Porpora was anxious too that he should.

"What, though, shall I do, and what shall I sing," said Consuelo in a low tone, "if he is afraid of excitement?"

"Excite him," said the maestro; "he should be aroused from his torpor, because then he feels like writing."

Consuelo sang an air from *Achillo in Sciro*, which had been arranged by Caldara, in 1736, and which was the best dramatic work of Metastasio. It had been performed on the occasion of the marriage of Maria Theresa. Metastasio was as much amazed by her voice and method as when he first heard her. He resolved, though, to maintain the same cold silence she had exhibited when he spoke of his health. He could not succeed, for notwithstanding all, he was an artist, and a noble heart beat in his bosom. Besides, when a good interpreter makes the accents of a part vibrate, and recalls to him the recollection of his triumphs, he cannot be offended.

The Abbe Metastasio attempted to resist the all-powerful charm of her voice. He coughed and moved about in his chair, like a man overcome by suffering. Suddenly, though, as if overcome by recollections which were more touching even than those of his own glory, he covered his face with his handkerchief, and began to sob. Porpora,

who stood behind his chair, made a sign to Consuelo to let him alone, and rubbed his hands maliciously.

These tears which were many and sincere, reconciled Consuelo to the abbe. As soon as she had finished the air, she drew near to kiss his hand and say, with an expression he could not resist: "Alas! sir how proud I would be to have thus excited you, were it not that some remorse hangs about my heart. I am afraid I have injured your health and that poisons all my joy."

"My dear young lady," said Metastasio, completely overcome, "you do not, cannot know the good and evil you have done me. Never before did I hear any female voice which recalled to me that of my dear Marianna! You have so completely recalled both her manner and expression to me, that methought I heard her. Ah! you have crushed my very heart!" He began to weep again.

"His lordship speaks of an illustrious person whom you should always look on as a model," said Porpora to his pupil. "He speaks of the celebrated Marianna Bulgarini."

"*La Romanina*?" said Consuelo. "Ah! when I was a child, I heard her in Venice; it is the first of my happy memories, and I never will forget her."

"I see," said Metastasio, "that you have heard her, and that she has made an ineffaceable impression on you; my child, imitate her in every thing, in her play as well as in her voice, in her kindness as well as in her greatness, in her power as well as in her devotion! How beautiful she seemed in the character of Venus, my first opera at Rome; that was my first triumph."

"And does she owe her greatest success to your lordship?"

"We contributed to the fortune of each other. I could never, though, discharge my obligations to her. Never did so much love, so much perseverance, and so many delicate cares inhabit a mortal soul. Angel of my life, I will weep for you always and aspire only to rejoin you." Here Metastasio wept again. Consuelo was much moved, and Porpora pretended to be, though in spite of every effort, his countenance continued to be scornful as possible. Consuelo observed this, and resolved to reproach him for it. As for Metastasio, he saw only the effect he expected to produce—emotion and admiration in Consuelo. He was a real poet: that is to say, he preferred to weep in the presence of others rather than in the solitude of his own room, and was never so much aware of his sufferings as when he was able to describe them eloquently. Led on by the opportunity, he told Consuelo so much of the early history of his youth, in which *La Romanina* had been so conspicuous: he told of the many services that generous woman had rendered him, of her filial tenderness to her old parents; and the maternal sacrifice she made in separating from him, and sending him to seek his fortune in Vienna. When in the choicest terms he had told her how his dear Marianna, with a lacerated heart and in sobs, had besought him to abandon her, and think only of himself, he said—"Oh! had she imagined the fate which awaited me, when separated from her, had she foreseen the suffering, the terror, anguish, contests, and reverses, and even the terrible disease I was to undergo here, she would have spared each of us this terrible immolation. Alas! I did not think we bade each other an eternal adieu, and that we were never to meet again on earth."

"How—what—did you never meet again?" said Consuelo, whose eyes were filled with tears. The words of Metastasio had a wonderful power over her. "Did she never come to Vienna?"

"She never did," said the abbe, completely overpowered.

"After so much devotion, did she not dare to come hither to see you?" said Consuelo, perfectly disregarding Porpora's gestures.

Metastasio was apparently absorbed in his own ideas and said nothing.

"But she may yet do so," said Consuelo candidly. "She certainly will. That would restore your health."

The abbe grew pale and expressed the greatest terror. The maestro coughed as loud as he could, and Consuelo remembering that La Romanina had been dead more than ten years, saw how indiscreet she had been, by reminding the poet of the departed, especially as he hoped to meet her again only in the tomb. She bit her lips, and soon retired with Porpora, who bore away as the fruits of this visit, only vague promises and forced civilities, such as everybody receives.

"How stupid you have been!" said he to Consuelo as soon as they were alone.

"Yes—yes; I see I have been. I forgot that La Romanina is no longer alive; think, maestro, if you please, that this loving and heart-broken man is attached to life as much as you please; I, though, am persuaded that sorrow for the loss of her he loved is the only cause of his sickness; and that, though some superstitious terror makes him tremble at death, he is not the less weary of life."

"My child," said Porpora, "people who are rich, honored, flattered, and in good health, are never weary of life: when people have no other passions or cares than such as he has, they either do not tell the truth, or play a part when they curse their existence."

"Tell me not that he never had any other passions. He loved Marianna, and I now know why he gave that name to his god-daughter, and to his niece Marianna Martiez." Consuelo was near saying the pupa of Joseph, but did not, for she paused abruptly.

"Go on," said Porpora: "his god-daughter, his niece, or his daughter."

"People say so: but what matters that?"

"It would prove the abbe soon found consolation for the absence of her he loved: when, though, you asked (may God forgive your stupidity) why Marianna did not come here to see him, he did not reply. I will, for him. La Romanina had indeed done him the greatest service which a man can ever receive from a woman. She had fed, lodged, dressed, succored, and sustained him in every condition of life. She even aided him in obtaining the position of *poeta cesareo*. She became the servant, the nurse, the benefactress of his old parents. All this is true—Marianna had a noble heart: I knew her well: it is also true that she was very anxious to see him again, and wished to be received at the Court Theatre. This also is true: the abbe took no interest in her and never would permit her. True, the most tender letters imaginable passed between them; I am sure those of the poet were admirable: so were hers, for they were printed. Though he said to his *diletissima amica* that he longed for the day of their reunion, that he toiled to bring about that happy dawn, *Maitre Renard* managed so well, that the unfortunate singer never chanced to subside into the crowd of his illustrious and *lucrative* loves, nor to meet the third Marianna, (some fatality existed, connecting him with women of that name,) the noble and all powerful Countess of Athlan, mistress of the last Cæsar. All say the result of this affair was a secret marriage; and I therefore think it in singular bad taste for him to tear his hair

for poor Romanina, whom he suffered to die of chagrin, while he was writing madrigals to the ladies of the imperial court."

"You comment and decide on all this like a cruel cynic, my dear maestro," said Consuelo, with not a little emotion.

"I speak as every one else does. Public rumor sustains all this. Bah! there are many actors who belong to no theatre. That is an old proverb."

"Public rumor is not always well informed: at all events, it is never very charitable. You see, maestro, I cannot think a man so renowned and gifted is only an actor playing his part. I have seen him shed real tears; and even though he should reproach himself for having forgotten his own Marianna too soon, remorse must increase the sincerity of his present regrets. I had, at all events, rather deem him weak than base. He was made an abbe, overwhelmed with benefits; the court was very devout, and amours with actresses would have given rise to great scandal. He did not wish exactly to betray and deceive la Bulgarini . . . He was afraid—he hesitated—he gained time, and she died."

"And, therefore, he thanked Providence," said the pitiless maestro. "Now our empress sends him boxes and rings with her cypher in brilliants, and golden pots of Spanish tobacco; seals made of one brilliant, all of which glitter not a little in the eyes of the poet, filled as they are with tears."

"And can this console him for having crushed la Romanina's heart?"

"Perhaps not. Yet, for these trifles, he crushed it——"

"A sad vanity; for my part, I could scarcely keep from laughing when he showed us his golden chandelier, with its golden capital, and the ingenious device the empress caused to be engraved on it——

'Perche possa risparmiarè i suoi occhi.'"

"Therefore was it that he appreciated the compliment, and said emphatically:—*Affettuosa espressione, valutabile piu dell'oro.*" Oh! poor man!"

"Unfortunate man," said Consuelo, with a sigh. She returned home very sad, for she had involuntarily compared the relation of Marianna and Metastasio, and herself and Albert. "To hope and to die," said she. "Is this the fate of those who love passionately? To make us wait and make us die! Is this the fate of those who passionately pursue the chimera of glory?"

"Why muse thus?" said the maestro. "I think, in spite of all your indiscretions, everything is as it should be, and that you have overcome Metastasio."

"The conquest of so weak a soul as his is a poor triumph. I fancy one who was too timid to receive la Bulgarini in the imperial theatre, will not have courage enough to receive me."

"As far as art is concerned, Metastasio now governs the empress."

"In matters of art Metastasio will give the empress no advice she is apparently unwilling to receive. It is all nonsense to speak of the favorites and counsellors of her majesty. . . . I have seen the features of Maria Theresa, and I tell you, maestro, she is too prudent to have lovers, and too imperious to have friends."

"Well," said Porpora, in a thoughtful manner, "we must gain the empress herself. You must sing some morning in her apartments, and she must speak to and talk with you. They say she only loves virtu-

ous persons; and if she has the eagle eye people say, she will appreciate and love you. I will at once go to work so that I may bring you tête-à-tête."

CHAPTER LXXXVIII.

ONE morning, when Joseph was sweeping the antechamber of Porpora, he forgot that the room was small, and the maestro's slumbers light, and he sang aloud a musical phrase which occurred to him, to which, with his brush, he kept up a kind of accompaniment. Porpora, offended at being awakened before his time, turned over in his bed and sought to go to sleep; but as he was pursued by this beautiful and fresh voice, which sang a phrase of much expression and beauty, he put on his *robe de chambre*, and looked through the key-hole, half pleased and half offended, also, at the idea of any one venturing to compose in his room before he chose to get up. How great was his surprise to hear Beppo singing and drumming, following out his idea, while he seemed intent on domestic cares.

"What is that you are singing," said the maestro, in a loud voice, as he threw open the door. Joseph, confused as a man might be who was suddenly awakened, threw down his broom and bunch of feathers, and was about to leave the house rapidly as he could. But for a long time, he had abandoned the hope of becoming Porpora's pupil, yet delighted in hearing the studies of Consuelo and the maestro, and in receiving secretly the instruction of that kind friend, when Porpora was absent. He would not then on any account have been dismissed; and to remove any suspicion, determined at once to tell a falsehood.

"What am I singing?" said he, looking down. "Alas! maestro, I do not know."

"Does any man sing anything he does not know? You do not tell the truth."

"I assure you, maestro, I do not. You terrified me so much, that I have already forgotten. I know it was wrong to sing so near your room, and was so engrossed that I thought myself far away. I said, now you can sing, for there is no one near to hear you, and say Hush, you sing false: you could not learn music."

"Who said you sang false?"

"Everybody."

"Well," said the maestro, in a stern voice, "I say you do not. Who tried to teach you music?"

"Why, Maestro Reuter, whom my friend Keller shaves, and who, after one lesson, bade me go about my business, saying I was an ass."

Joseph knew enough of the maestro to be aware that he had no great respect for Reuter; and on this allusion to him, placed no small reliance as a stepping-stone to the good graces of Porpora, though he expected the latter to be useful to him. Reuter, though, in his visits, never deigned to notice his old pupil.

"Master Reuter is an ass himself," muttered Porpora. "That, though, is not the question," said he aloud. "I wish you to tell me where you fished out that passage;" and he sang the one Joseph had, perhaps, sang ten times without thinking of it.

"Oh, that!" said Haydn, who had begun to form a better opinion

of the disposition of his master, though he was not yet sure of it; "it is something I have heard la signora sing."

"Ah! Consuelo? my daughter? I did not know that. Then you listen at this door?"

"No, monsieur; but the music is heard in all the rooms, even in the kitchen, and people must hear."

"I do not like to be served by persons with such a memory, and who, perhaps will shout out my unpublished ideas in the streets. Pack up your things to-day, and in the evening seek another place."

This blow fell like a thunderbolt on poor Joseph, who went to the kitchen in tears. Consuelo soon heard the story of his misfortune, and restored his confidence by promising to regulate matters.

"What, maestro," said she to Porpora, as she handed him his coffee, "would you dismiss the poor lad, who is laborious and faithful, because probably for once in his life, he did not sing false?"

I tell you that servant is a meddlesome fellow, and a liar—that he has been induced by some enemy of mine to enter my service, so as to obtain the secret of my compositions, and appropriate them before they are published. I venture to swear the fellow already knows my new opera by heart, and copies the manuscripts as soon as my back is turned. How many of my ideas have I not found in those pretty operas which turned the heads of all Venice, while mine were swept away; and people said,—'That old fellow, Porpora, gives us new operas, the airs of which are sung at every corner.' Now this morning the fool betrayed himself, and sang a phrase which certainly comes from Mynheer Hasse, of which I have made a note; and to avenge myself, will put it in my new opera, to repay the trick he has so often played me."

"Be careful, maestro; that phrase has, perhaps, been published. You do not know all our cotemporary publications by heart."

"I have heard them, though; and I tell you it is too remarkable for me to forget it."

"Well, maestro, thank you for the compliment, for the phrase is mine."

This was not true, for the phrase in question had that very morning been shut up in the head of Haydn. She, though, had already learned it, in order to be able to conquer the distrustful investigations of the maestro. Porpora asked her to sing it. She did so at once, pretending that she had tried to arrange it on the previous evening, to gratify the Abbe Metastasio; the first verses of his pretty pastoral.

*"Glia reide la primavera,
Col suo fiorito aspetto;
Glia il grato zeffiretto
Scherza fra l'erbe e i fiori.
Tornan le frondi agli alberi
L'erbette al prato tornano;
Sol non ritorna a me
La pace del mio cor."*

"I had repeated my first phrase frequently, when I heard in the ante-chamber Master Beppo singing it as valorously as possible. I begged him to hush. After about an hour I heard him singing it on the stairway, so completely disfigured that I got out of humor with it."

"How, then, is it that he sings so well to-day? What has happened in his sleep?"

"I will explain, maestro. I observed the lad had a strong and even

an accurate voice, but sang falsely, from a bad ear, mind, or memory I amused myself by making him go through the scales, after your method, to see whether that would succeed in a person with the musical faculty but partially developed.

"It will always succeed," said Porpora. "There is no such thing as a false voice and an ear which is practiced——"

"Precisely what I say," said Consuelo, who was anxious to come to the end. "That is precisely what has happened—at the conclusion of the first lesson I had taught him what Reuter and all those Germans never could have given him an idea of. I then sang my composition to him, and for the first time he repeated it precisely correct. It was a perfect revelation to him." 'Ah! mademoiselle,' said he, 'had I been taught thus, perhaps I would have been able to learn like others. I will confess, though, that I never could understand the instructions at St. Stephen's.'"

"He has then really been to that institution?"

"Yes; and was expelled with disgrace; you need only to ask Reuter. He will tell you that Joseph is a hard case, and that it is musically impossible to form him."

"Come hither you," said Porpora to Beppo, who stood behind the door with tears in his eyes. "Place yourself beside me, and let me find out if you understood the lesson you received yesterday."

The malicious maestro then began to teach Joseph the elements of music in the confused, pedantic and involved manner which is peculiar to the Germans.

Had Joseph, who knew too much, not too fully comprehended the elements, in spite of Porpora's efforts to make them obscure, and suffered his knowledge to appear, he would have been lost. He was shrewd enough to perceive the snare set for him, and exhibited such resolute stupidity, that after a long and obstinate contest, the maestro was completely satisfied.

"I see that your powers are very small," said the latter as he arose and continued a deception of which the others were not the dupes. "Take up your broom again, and if you wish to continue in my service, never try to sing."

After a lapse of about two hours, whether he was stimulated by a desire to return to an art which he had long neglected, Porpora remembered that he was a singing master, and recalled Joseph to the stool. He explained to him the same principles, but now did so distinctly, with that powerful and deep logic which moves and classifies all things; in one word, with that wonderful rapidity of which men of genius alone are capable.

Now Haydn saw that he might appear to understand, and Porpora was enchanted by his triumph. Though the maestro taught him things he had long studied and knew as well as possible, this lesson was of a positively certain use to him; it taught him how to teach; and as at times when Porpora did not need him, he gave music lessons in the city, he resolved to make use of this excellent demonstration as a means of preserving his patrons.

"Well, maestro," said he to Porpora, continuing to keep up the by-play until the end of the lesson, "I like this music better than the other, and think I can learn it; but as for this morning's lesson, I had rather go back to Saint Stephen's than attempt to learn it."

"It is, though, what you were taught at that institution. Are there two musics?—no more than there are two Gods."

"I beg your pardon, maestro; there is the music of Reuter, which tires me to death, and yours which does not——"

"I thank you for your compliment, Signor Beppo," said Porpora, not at all displeased at the compliment.

Thenceforth Porpora gave Haydn lessons, and they soon reached the lessons of Italian song and the first ideas of lyrical composition. He made such rapid progress that the maestro was at once charmed, mazed and surprised. When Consuelo saw his old suspicions about to spring up again, she advised Haydn how to act so as to dissipate them—a little apparent neglect, a feigned pre-occupation were sometimes necessary to arouse the passion for imparting knowledge in Porpora's mind, for it is always the case that something of resistance is required to arouse to the greatest energy any very powerful faculty. It often happened that Joseph was forced to pretend weariness and inattention, to obtain these precious lessons, at the idea even of neglecting which he trembled. The pleasure of contradiction and the desire of success contended in the ill-tempered and quarrelsome mind of the old professor. Beppo never profited so much by his lessons as when they were received clearly, eloquently, and ironically from the ill-temper of Porpora.

While the house of Porpora was the scene of these seemingly frivolous events, the consequences of which, however, have so much to do in the history of the art, since the genius of one of the most voluminous and celebrated composers of his time received its final expansion and completion, things exerting a more immediate influence on the romance of Consuelo's life were taking place. La Corilla, who had better capacity for attending to her own business, gained ground every day, and perfectly recovered from her confinement, was making arrangements for a renewal of her engagement at the theatres of the court—a great virtuoso and a mediocre musician, she pleased the director and his wife much better than Consuelo. All knew the learned Porporina would bring exalted taste with her, and that in her mind there was no admiration for the operas of Maestro Holzbäuer and his wife's talent. It was well known that great artists, when badly seconded, and forced to become expressions of meagre thoughts, do not always preserve, when they are overpowered by violence done their taste and conscience, that matter of routine, that perfect sang-froid which mediocre persons bear so cavalierly in the representation of the worst works amid the cacophony of compositions badly studied and badly understood by their companions.

Even when, thanks to the miracles of kindness and talents, they triumph over those around them and their parts, the envious are not satisfied, the composer guesses at their inward suffering, and constantly dreads to see their factitious inspiration grow cold and endanger his success. The public itself, amazed and troubled it knows not why, guesses at the monstrous anomaly of genius subjected to a vulgar idea, struggling in the narrow chains it has suffered to be cast around it, and almost sighs at the applause it receives. M. Holzbäuer, was well aware of the small estimate Consuelo placed on his music. She had unfortunately exhibited her opinion on an excursion she had made when, being disguised as a boy, she fancied she had to do with one of those personages to be met with but once in a life-time. She spoke frankly, without any idea that some day or other her fate would be at the mercy of the artist friend of the canon. Holzbäuer had not forgotten the circumstance, and piqued to the very quick, though he

retained his calmness, discretion and courtesy, he swore to prevent her success. As though he was unwilling that Porpora's pupil should have any reason to find fault with his revenge and base susceptibility, he had told Consuelo of the affair of the breakfast at the presbytery. This *recontre* did not seem to make any impression on the director who appeared to have nearly forgotten the features of the little Bertoni, and who had not the least idea that the wandering singer and *la Porporina* were one and the same person. Consuelo could not but enter into a labyrinth of conjectures in relation to the conduct of Holzbäuer in regard to her. "During my travels," said she, "was I so perfectly disguised, and did the arrangement of my hair so completely change my face, that a man who looked at me with clear and penetrating eyes as his, could not recognise me?"

"Count Hoditz did not know you when he saw you for the first time at the ambassador's," said Joseph, "and perhaps had he not seen your note he never would have done so."

"True, but the Count has such a haughty and contemptuous way of looking at people, that he really does not see them. I am sure he would have had no idea of my sex, but for the information he received from Baron Trenck. On the other hand, Holzbäuer, when he first saw me here, and whenever he sees me, fixes on me those attentive and curious eyes which I observed at the Presbytery. For what reason does he always conceal that secret of a foolish adventure which might seriously injure my reputation, if he pleased to place a bad interpretation on it, and might perhaps really offend the maestro, who thinks I came to Vienna without difficulty, hindrance, or any romantic incidents, at the very time that Holzbäuer deprecates my manner and method, and deserts me as much as possible to avoid the necessity of engaging me? He hates and repels me, yet though he has the most powerful arms in the world against my success, does not use them——"

The explanation of this mystery Consuelo soon discovered. Before, though, we tell what happened to her, we must remind all that a powerful coterie was at work to supplant her. That Corilla was beautiful and coquettish; that the Prime Minister Kaunitz often saw her, and loved to intermingle in green-room cabals, and that Maria Theresa, to repose from her great cares, amused herself by gossip about such matters with her Minister, laughed at the interest he took in such trifles, though she herself had sympathy with them, inasmuch as they exhibited to her in miniature a spectacle somewhat analogous to that witnessed in the three principal courts of Europe, each of which was governed by female intrigue—her own, that of the Czarina, and that of Madame de Pompadour.

CHAPTER LXXXIX.

It is well known that Maria Theresa gave an audience every week to all who wished to speak with her—a paternally hypocritical custom, which her son Joseph II. religiously observed, and which is yet observed in Austria. Besides, Maria Theresa willingly gave private audiences to all who wished to enter her service. Never was any ly approached.

Porpora obtained an audience, in order that the empress, being able to see the honest face of Consuelo distinctly, might perhaps conceive some decided sympathy for her; so at least the maestro hoped. Aware how her majesty insisted on good morals and discreet deportment, he said she would be struck by the candor and modesty which were so evident in every lineament of his pupil. They were introduced into one of the small rooms of the palace, into which an instrument had been placed, and into which, after about a quarter of an hour, the empress came. She had just received some distinguished persons and wore her court dress, as she appears on the coins bearing her effigy, in a brocade robe, with a crown on her head and a little Hungarian sabre by her side. In that dress she was truly beautiful, not with the impressive and ideal nobility which her courtiers attributed to her, but fresh, joyous, and with an open and happy face, a confiding and attractive bearing. This was indeed the queen, Maria Theresa, whom the magnates proclaimed with their drawn swords on a day of great enthusiasm. At the first glance, though, she seemed a good rather than a great sovereign, she had no coquetry, and the familiarity of her manners denoted a calm mind without any feminine cunning. When one regarded her fixedly, and when she spoke earnestly, something of cold cunning was visible in her smiling and affable face. This cunning, though, was masculine and imperial, and seemed to partake not in the least of gallantry.

"You will let me hear your pupil at once," said she to Porpora; "I am already aware of her great knowledge, and I cannot forget how she pleased me in the oratorio of *Betulia Liberata*. I wish, though, first to converse privately with her. I have many questions to put to her, and as I rely on her frankness, I hope to be able to accord to her the protection she asks of me."

Porpora left at once, reading in her Majesty's face that she wished to be entirely alone with Consuelo. He went into the next gallery, where he suffered much with cold, for the court, ruined by the expenses of the war, was governed with great economy, and the character of Maria Theresa was not at all in opposition to the exigencies of her position.

When she was thus tête-à-tête with the daughter and mother of Cæsars, the heroine of Germany, and the greatest woman then in Europe, Consuelo felt neither troubled nor intimidated. Whether her artistic education made her thus indifferent to all the pomp which glittered around Maria Theresa, or because her noble and pure soul felt itself equal to all mortal grandeur, she waited with calmness of manner and serenity of mind until it should please her majesty to question her.

The empress sat on a sofa, and pulled a little one side her baldric of gems, which pressed a little too much her round white shoulder, and spoke thus:

"I repeat to you, my child, that I place a high estimate on talent, and that I have no doubt of your knowledge and excellence in your art. You must, though, have been told that to me talent is nothing without good conduct; and that I esteem a pure and pious heart more highly than great genius."

Consuelo stood erect, and heard this exordium with great respect. It did not though seem correct to her to speak her own praises; and as she also had the greatest repugnance to speak of virtues she pretended in such simplicity, she waited for the empress to question her

more directly about her principles and her resolutions. It was then precisely the time to speak to her, in the phrase of a well-turned madrigal, about her angelic piety, her sublime virtues and the impossibility of error with such an example before her eyes. Delicate minds are always afraid to insult a great character by proffering to them commonplace praise. Sovereigns, though, if not the dupes of this vulgar incense, are at least so used to it that they esteem it a mere matter of etiquette. Maria Theresa was amazed at the young girl's silence; and in a manner less gentle and less encouraging, said:

"Now I know, my dear girl, that your conduct is not very exact, and that, not being married, you live on terms of great intimacy with a young man of your profession, the name of whom I do not recall just now."

"I can make but one reply to your Imperial Majesty," said Consuelo, with some excitement at this accusation: "I have never committed one fault which would render me incompetent to bear the glance of your Majesty without modest pride and gratified joy."

Maria Theresa was struck with the proud expression which the face of Consuelo assumed. Five or six years before it would doubtless have occasioned pleasure and sympathy. Maria Theresa was royal at heart, and the exercise of her power had given a kind of intoxication to her mind which made her wish to see all bow and kneel to her. Maria Theresa wished to be the only free agent in her dominions, either as a queen or a woman; she was then shocked at the proud smile and frank glance of the young girl, who was to her but as a worm, and with whom she wished to amuse herself, as people do with a slave, urged on from curiosity to talk.

"I have asked you, mademoiselle, the name of the young man who lives with you in the house of the Maestro Porpora," said the empress with emotion.

"His name is Joseph Haydn," said Consuelo with calmness.

"Well, on account of his devotion to you he entered the service of Porpora as a valet de chambre. The maestro is ignorant of the young man's motives, while you, who encourage him, are not."

"Some one has slandered me to your Majesty. This young man never had any affection for me, (Consuelo thought she was speaking the truth.) I know that he loves another. If any deception is practised towards my very estimable master, the motive is innocent and perhaps even praiseworthy. Love of art alone decided Joseph Haydn to enter the service of Porpora. Since your Majesty deigns to examine the character of your humblest servants, and as it is evident that nothing escapes the clearness of your perception, I am sure you will do justice to my sincerity if you wish to examine my cause."

Maria Theresa had too much penetration not to distinguish the accents of truth. She had not yet forgotten the heroism of her by-gone days, though she was on that declivity of absolute power which gradually extinguishes even the noblest souls.

"Young girl, I think you true, and your words chaste; but I discover in you too much pride, and a distrust of my maternal kindness, which makes me fear that I can do nothing for you."

"If I have to do with the maternal kindness of Maria Theresa," said Consuelo, touched by that phrase, the commonplace nature of which she was unfortunately ignorant of, "I am ready to kneel to implore it, but—"

"Go on my child," said Maria Theresa, who, for some unknown

reason, was anxious to bend her strange visitor. "Say what you think."

"If though I have to do with imperial justice, I have nothing to confess; for a purer breath does not sully the atmosphere which even the gods breathe. I feel myself fully worthy of your protection."

"Porporina," said the empress, "you are a woman of talent, and your originality, which would offend another, does you no injury in my mind. I have told you that I believe you frank, yet I know that you have something to confess. Why do you hesitate to do so? You love Joseph Haydn, and I do not doubt but that your liaison is pure. You love him for the very pleasure of seeing him frequently. Let me suppose your anxiety originates in the wish to witness his progress in music,—it makes you venture to expose your reputation, the most precious treasure with which a woman is endowed. You perhaps are afraid that your master and your adopted father, will not consent to your marriage with a poor and powerless artist. Perhaps also, for I will believe all you say, the young man loves another, and proud, as I see you are, you conceal your love, and sacrifice your good name, without any personal satisfaction from this devotion. Well, my dear child, while you have the opportunity which now presents itself, but which perhaps will do so no more, I would open my heart to my sovereign, and would say—'To you, who can do anything, and wish to do good, I confide my fate. Remove all obstacles in the way of my prosperity. By one word you can change the wishes of my tutor and of him I love;—you can make me happy, restore to me the respect of the public, and place me in so honorable a position that I will be able to enter the service of the court.' This is the confidence you should have in the maternal interest of Maria Theresa, and I regret that you have not."

"I understand very well," said Consuelo to herself, "that from some caprice, from childish despotism, you wish the Zingarella to clasp your knees, because you see hers do not tremble before you, and that this is a rare phenomenon. Well, you will not have that gratification, at least until I see you deserve this honor."

These and other reflections passed rapidly through her mind, while Maria Theresa was preaching to her. She said the fortune of Porpora now depended on the hazard of the die, on a mere imperial whim, and that she might, to secure her master's prosperity, slightly humiliate herself. She expected that Maria Theresa would immediately appear great to her, so as to justify her adoration.

When the empress had finished her homily, Consuelo replied—"I will reply to all your Majesty wishes, if you deign to command me."

"Yes—speak! speak!" said the empress, piqued at her impassive countenance.

"I will then tell your Majesty that for the first time in my life have I learned that my reputation has been compromised by the presence of Joseph Haydn in the maestro's house. I thought myself too insignificant to attract public attention, and had I been told, when coming to the imperial palace, that the empress herself thought of and censured me, I would have fancied that I dreamed."

Maria Theresa interrupted her, and fancied that she saw something of irony in this reflection of Consuelo. "You must not be astonished," said she in a rather emphatic tone, "that I interest myself in the minutest details of the lives of those for whom I am responsible to God."

"We may be astonished," said Consuelo adroitly, "at what we admire. If great things are the most simple, they are, at least, rare enough to surprise us at first."

"You should also," added the empress, "comprehend the particular interest I feel for you and all the artists whom I love to make the ornaments of my court. In every part of the world, the theatre is a school for scandal and an abyss of turpitude. I have a disposition praiseworthy at least, even though it be impracticable, to reinstate and to purify in the mind of God and man, the profession which has been subjected to blind contempt, and even to religious persecution in other nations. While in France, the church shut its doors in their faces, I wish in my States to remove all obstacles. I have never admitted, either into my Italian opera troupe, my company of French comedians, or the national theatre, any but persons of well-known morality, or who bona fide, have resolved to reform their conduct. You know my actors are married, that I even become sponsor for their children at the baptismal font, and resolve, by every possible favor, to encourage the legitimacy of births and the observance of the marriage tie."

"Had we known that," said Consuelo, "we would have besought your majesty to be the god-mother of Angela, in my place. Your majesty sows to gather a good harvest, and had I a fault on my conscience, I would be glad to find in her a confessor, charitable as God's own self. But——"

"Continue the subject of which you were speaking just now."

"I was saying," said Consuelo, "that being ignorant of the blame attached to the residence of Joseph Hadyn, in our house, I was not so very devoted in exposing myself to it."

"I understand," said the empress; "you deny all?"

"How can I confess an untruth!" said Consuelo; "I have neither any love for my master's pupil, nor have I any wish to marry him. Even if the case were otherwise, I would not accept a hand offered me by imperial decree."

"Then you wish to remain unmarried?" said the empress, rising. "Then I must tell you, it is a condition of life which, in the point of view of respectability, does not offer all the securities I require. It is also inconvenient for a young person to appear in certain roles, and represent certain passions, unless sanctioned and protected by a husband. You might have triumphed over your opponent, Madame Corilla, of whom I have heard much good, but who, by no means, pronounces Italian as well as you do. She, though, is a married woman and the mother of a family—a circumstance which gives her great advantages, in case you persist in remaining in your present condition."

Consuelo could not refrain from muttering between her teeth, "Married!" She was completely overpowered at the idea of that virtuous—remarkably virtuous—person being preferred to her.

"Yes, married!" said the empress positively, and angry at the suspicion expressed in relation to her ritegee. "She gave birth to a child recently, which she has confided to a laborious ecclesiastic—the Canon * * * *—to receive a religious education. Certainly, that worthy person would not have taken charge of it, unless he knew the mother had a right to his esteem."

"I am sure of it," said Consuelo, a little consoled at the idea that the canon was approved of and not censured for his adoption; she was, though, most indignant.

"This history is written, and thus monarchs are instructed," said she when the empress, with a stern air, had left the room, making as she passed but a slight inclination of the head. "Well, something of good can always be extracted from misfortune, and the human errors have often a good result. The canon will not lose his priory—Corilla will, if the empress interferes, become a virtuous woman, and I have not knelt to one who is no better than I am."

"Well!" said Porpora, with an anxious voice from the gallery in which he had been impatiently walking and twisting his hands; "I hope we have succeeded."

"No, my kind maestro, we have failed."

"How calmly you say this! What the devil is the matter?"

"You must not mention the devil; he has no chance to show himself at court. When we are out of the palace I will tell you all."

"Well, what is the matter?" said Porpora impatiently, as soon as they had passed the ramparts.

"Do you remember, maestro, what we said of the Prime Minister, Kaunitz, when we left the Margrave's?"

"We said he was an old gossip. Has he foiled us?"

"Certainly. Well, now I tell you her Majesty, the empress, Queen of Hungary, is also a gossip."

CHAPTER XC.

CONSUELO told Porpora all she thought he should know of the motives of Maria Theresa for the kind of disgrace to which she had been subjected. The rest would, perhaps, have irritated, disturbed, and offended the maestro with Joseph Haydn, without any benefit at all. She also decided not to tell her young friend what she concealed from Porpora. Rightly enough she contemned the vague accusations which she knew had been made by two or three enemies, to the empress, and which had no public circulation. The ambassador Korner, to whom she confided every thing, approved of her following this course; and to prevent malice from obtaining possession of these seeds of slander, acted prudently and wisely. He persuaded Porpora to remain at his hotel with Consuelo, and Haydn entered the service of the ambassador, being admitted to the table of the private secretaries. Thus the old maestro was freed from want, and Joseph continued to render him some personal services, which enabled him to see him often and to take his lessons. Consuelo was protected from all malicious insinuations.

In spite of this, Corilla was engaged instead of Consuelo for the Imperial Theatre. The latter had not been able to please Maria Theresa. This great queen, though laughing at the green-room intrigues which Kaunitz and Metastasio half displayed to her in the most charming manner, wished to assume the *role* of an incarnate and crowned providence amid a troupe of strolling actors, who professed to her to be repentant sinners and converted demons. It may be imagined that among these hypocrites, who received little pensions and presents for their so-called piety, were found neither Caffariello, Farinelli, la Tesi, nor Madame Hasse; none, in fine, of those great

virtuosi Vienna sometimes heard, and who, from their high talent, were leniently treated. The lower parts, though, were always occupied by people who deigned to flatter the devout and moralizing humor of her majesty; who exhibited her intriguing disposition in every thing, and used all her art to bring about the marriage or conversion of an actor. We may read in the *Memoirs of Favart*, (that interesting romance of real life in the green-room,) the difficulty he had to find actresses and singers willing to go to Vienna. The court insisted on having them cheap, and besides, chaste as vestals. I think this furnisher of musical chastity—specially appointed by Maria Theresa—succeeded in finding one. This speaks volumes in favor of our operatic artists! as was then said.

Thus Maria Theresa wished to make even her amusement an edifying pretext for the display of the beneficent majesty of her character. Monarchs always place themselves in postures, and great monarchs, perhaps, more frequently than others. This Porpora frequently said, and he was not mistaken. The great empress was a zealous Catholic, an exemplary mother, and yet had no objections to talk to a prostitute, to catechise and call forth the strongest confessions, merely to have the glory of bringing a repentant Magdalen to the foot of the altar. The privy purse of her majesty, thus standing between vice and contrition, worked numerous and infallible miracles of grace. Thus Corilla, weeping and crushed, if not in person, for I doubt if she could bend her stern character to such a comedy—but in the person of Kaunitz, who watched over her new-born virtue—was certain to triumph over a decided young girl, who was bold and resolute as the immaculate Consuelo. Maria Theresa loved no dramatic proteges that she could not say she had herself been the creator. Self-made and self-guarded virtues did not greatly interest her. She did not have that confidence her own virtue should have inspired her to believe. The bearing of Consuelo also had piqued her, and she had found her calm and reflective. It was too arrogant and presumptuous conduct for a little gipsy to presume to be honest and virtuous without the empress; and when Kaunitz, therefore, who feigned to be very impartial towards each of the singers, asked if she had granted the prayer of “the young girl,” the empress answered, “I was not satisfied with her principles; do not mention her again to me.” The voice, face, and even the name of la Porporina were completely forgotten.

One single word alone was necessary and sufficient to explain to Porpora the reason of his being out of favor. Consuelo told him that her position as an unmarried woman seemed inadmissible to the empress. “But la Corilla?” said Porpora, who had known that the latter had been engaged. “Has her majesty found la Corilla a husband?”

“As well as I could understand or devise the meaning of her majesty’s words, la Corilla here passes for a widow.”

“Ah, thrice ten, a hundred times a widow, in fact,” said Porpora, with a bitter smile. “What will people say, though, when it is known what she is, and when begins another series of her numberless widowhoods? And the child they told me of, whom she left with an old canon near Vienna? That child she wished to present to Count Justiniani, and whom Justiniani advised her to confide to the paternal tenderness of Anzoletto. She will laugh at all this with her companions; she will tell of it, as she is wont, in cynical terms, and will

laugh in the privacy of her dressing-room at the trick she has played the empress."

"But if the empress learns the truth?"

"She will not; sovereigns are surrounded, I imagine, by ears, which are mere portals to their own. Much remains outside, and nothing enters the sanctuary of the imperial ear but what the guardians suffer to pass. Besides," said Porpora, "Corilla will always have the resource of being able to confess. M. Kaunitz will always point out her penitence."

The poor maestro exhaled his bile in such bitter jests as the above. He became hopeless of being able to produce the opera lying in his desk—now completed—especially as it was for a libretto not by Metastasio, who had a monopoly of the poetry of the court. He was not without a presentiment of the little tact Consuelo had displayed in captivating the good graces of the empress. He could not, therefore, repress his ill humor. As an additional misfortune, the Venetian ambassador, in an enthusiasm of pride and pleasure at the development of the musical intelligence of Haydn, one day told him all the truth about the young man, and showed him his beautiful attempts in musical composition, which began to be circulated and to be talked of by amateurs. The maestro had been deceived, and became much enraged. Luckily, though, he did not suspect Consuelo of being the accomplice of the *ruse*. Korner, seeing the storm he had created, hastened to prevent his suspicions by a good lie. He could not, though, prevent Haydn from being banished for some days from the maestro's room. All the ascendancy which his protection and his services gave him over the latter were required to restore him to favor. Porpora, though, for a long time was offended with him, and made him do penance for his offence by a more minute discharge of his duties as a valet than was necessary, since the valets of the embassy were at his orders. Haydn did not refuse, and by means of gentleness, patience, and devotion, being constantly exhorted and encouraged by Consuelo, was always faithful and attentive to his lessons, finally disarming the rude professor, whom he induced to impart to him all he had the wish or capacity to learn.

The genius of Haydn dreamed of a different route from any yet attempted, and the future author of the symphony confided to Consuelo his ideas in relation to the development of its instrumental arrangement in the most gigantic proportions. These gigantic proportions, which seem to us now so simple and natural, must have seemed as much the utopia of a fool, as the revelation of a new era of genius. Joseph yet mistrusted himself, and not without trepidation confessed to Consuelo the terror which tormented him. Consuelo, too, was at first much afraid. Until that time the instrumentation played but a secondary part, and when isolated from the human voice, had no complication. There was, though, so much calmness and perseverance in her young associate—he exhibited in his whole conduct so much real modesty, and so calm a research after the truth—that Consuelo, unable to think him presumptuous, considered him prudent, and encouraged him in his plans. Just then Haydn composed a serenade for three instruments, which, with his friends, he performed beneath the windows of the *dilettanti*, the attention of whom he was anxious to attract to his works. He began with Porpora, who, not knowing the name of the composer, heard with pleasure, and clapped his hands without reserve. On this occasion, the

ambassador, who was in the secret, said nothing, and did not betray the young composer. Porpora was unwilling that one taking lessons in plain song should be distracted by other words.

At this time Porpora received a letter from the admirable contralto, Hubert, whom he had taught, and who bore the name of Porporino. That artist was in the service of Frederick the Great. He was not, like the professor's other pupils, infatuated with his own merit, so as to forget his obligations to Porpora. From him the Porporino had imbibed a kind of talent he had never attempted to modify, and which had always succeeded. He used to sing in an ample, pure style, without ornament, and without deserting the correct method of his master. He was particularly admirable in the *adagio*. Porpora, therefore, had a liking for him very difficult to be concealed in the presence of the fanatical admirers of Farinelli and Caffariello. He did not deny the skill, the brilliancy, and the suppleness of those great *virtuosi*, as being able to give more *eclat* and to delight more suddenly an audience greedy of difficulties. He said, though, to himself, that Porporino made no sacrifices to bad taste, and that people were never weary of hearing him. It really appears the Prussians never did, for he shone there during the whole of his musical existence, more than forty years, dying at a very advanced age.

This letter of Hubert told Porpora that his music was highly appreciated at Berlin, and that if he would join him, he would use every effort to have his new compositions received and admitted. He advised him to leave Vienna, a city in which the artists were constantly involved in the cabals of cliques, and to obtain a distinguished female singer who would appear with himself in some of Porpora's own works. He spoke highly of the king's enlightened taste, and of the honorable protection he gave musicians. "If this plan suit your views, reply at once what are your pretensions, and three months hence I will promise you an engagement, at least sufficient to procure you a peaceable life. As for glory, my dear instructor, do you but write, and we will sing so as to cause you to be appreciated even as far as Dresden."

At this last phrase Porpora erected his ears like an old war-horse. It was an allusion to the triumphs of Hasse and his singers at Dresden. The idea of equalling his rival in the north of Germany was grateful to the maestro, and he at once conceived an aversion to Vienna, the Viennese, and the court. He at once replied to the Porporino, authorising him to make arrangements for him at Berlin. He made his *ultimatum* small as possible in order to prevent disappointment. He spoke in the highest terms of la Porporina, saying she was his sister, both in education and in genius, as well as by name. He urged him to make the best possible terms for her. All this he did without consulting Consuelo until after the letter was gone.

The poor girl was terrified at the very mention of Prussia, and the name of Frederick the Great made her shudder. Since the affair of the deserter she had always looked on the celebrated monarch as an ogre and vampire. Porpora complained not a little at the disregard she showed at the idea of a new engagement, and as she could not tell him the story of Carl and the promises of Mayer, she looked down, and suffered him to scold away.

When she found time to think, though, she found some consolation in the idea. It postponed her return to the stage, for the Porporino might fail and at all events asked three months to conclude the ar-

rangement. Till then she might dream of the love of Count Albert, and resolve herself to return it. If she saw a probability of uniting herself to him, or if she did not, she might with honor and frankness keep the resolution she had formed, to think of him with distraction and without constraint.

Before she announced the news to her hosts at Riesenbergh, she resolved to wait until Count Christian had replied to her letter. The expected reply did not come, and Consuelo began to be afraid that old Rudolstadt was become dissatisfied with the contemplated marriage, and was trying to induce Albert to renounce it. One day, however, she received a letter by the hands of Keller, which ran as follows:

"You promised to write to me. You did so, when you indirectly advised my father of the difficulties of our present situation. I see you wear a burden, to relieve you of which would be a crime in me. I see that my good father is terrified at the consequences of your submission to Porpora—though I am not now afraid of anything—because you exhibit to my father terror and regret for the course you have been led to take. This satisfies me that you will not with inconsideration condemn me to eternal despair. No, you will not break your word; you will try to love me. What matters it to me where you are, or how you are engaged, or in what rank the respect or prejudice of men may hold you, or even the obstacles which keep you from me, if you bid me hope or despair? I suffer much, certainly, but can bear more without failing, until you shall have extinguished all hope.

"I will wait, for I have learned to do so. Do not be afraid to pain me, by taking time to reply to me. Do not write to me under the impression of fear or pity, with which I will have nothing to do. Take my fate into your heart, my soul into yours; and when the time is come, whether in a convent cell, or on the stage of a theatre, tell me never to annoy you again, or, to come to join you. I shall either lie at your feet, or be mute for ever.

ALBERT."

"Noble Albert," said Consuelo, as she placed the paper to her lips, "I feel that I love you. It would be impossible not to do so, and I will not hesitate to say so. I wish to reward you by a promise of constancy and devotion."

At once she sat down to write. The sound of Porpora's voice made her at once hide the letter in her bosom, as well as the answer she was about to write to Albert. During the whole day she could not be alone for one moment. It seemed that the old growler guessed at her wish to be alone, and took care that she should not. Night came, Consuelo became calm, and understood that so grave a determination demanded a longer test of her own feelings. It was necessary that Albert should not be exposed to the disastrous consequences of a reaction on her own emotions. She re-read his letter a hundred times, and saw that he apprehended both the pain of a refusal and a precipitate promise. She resolved to think for some days: Albert himself seemed to insist on it.

The life Consuelo led at the embassy was calm and regular. To avoid all misinterpretations, Korner never visited her in her room, and never, in even Porpora's company, invited her to his. He only met her in the apartments of Madame Wilhelmina, where he could speak to her without compromising her, and where, to oblige the company, she often sang. Joseph was often sent for to accompany her.

Caffariello came thither frequently, and Count Hoditz sometimes. Metastasio came rarely. All regretted that Consuelo had failed; but neither of the three dared to strive for her. Porpora was indignant, and found it very difficult to conceal it. Consuelo made every effort to soothe him, and make him associate with men, in spite of their weakness. She excited him to work, and thanks to her, from time to time, regained his hope and enthusiasm. She encouraged him only in the pique which induced him not to take her into society, and not to make her sing. Happy at the idea of being forgotten by the great, whom she had received with terror and repugnance, she gave herself up to serious study and deep reverie, cultivated the friendship (now become calm and holy) of Haydn, saying every day, as she attended to the wants of the good maestro, that, if nature had not provided for her a life without emotion and movement, it had least of all made her ambitious and fond of change. She had, indeed, not yet dreamed of a more animated existence, of more lively joy, and of more expansive and vast intellectual pleasures. The pure world of art, though, which she had created for herself, was so noble and sympathetic, never manifesting itself except under unpleasant circumstances, that she preferred an obscure and retired life, gentle affections, and a laborious solitude.

Consuelo had no new reflections to make, in relation to Rudolstadt's offer. She could entertain no doubt in relation to his generosity, and the unalterable holiness of the love of the son, and the kind indulgence of the father. She had not to inquire into her reason or her conscience. Both spoke in favor of Albert. On this occasion she had, without any difficulty, triumphed over her memory of Anzoletto. Victory over one passion enables us to subdue others. She, therefore, feared no influence, and henceforth would triumph over all other temptations.

Passion, however, did not speak in her heart in favor of Albert with any power. It was, therefore, still her duty to question that heart, in the depth of which a mysterious calm reflected the idea of a perfect love. Sitting at her window, the *naïve* girl often saw the young people of the city passing down the street. Bold students, noble lords, melancholy artists, proud cavaliers, were often the objects of a serious and chaste examination, which in its character was almost infantine.

"How," said she, "is my heart—frivolous or chaste? Am I capable of loving madly and irresistibly at first sight, as many of my country-women of *la Scuola* confessed or boasted before me to each other? Is love a magic flash, which overpowers our nature, and turns us violently from the affections we protested to keep, in the days of our innocence? Is there among those men who look up to my window one face which troubles or fascinates me? That one with his tall form and lofty step seems to me more noble and handsome than Albert. The other, with his fine hair and handsome dress, effaces the image of my betrothed? Would I be the gaily decked lady I see in yonder coach, which the noble-looking gentleman now hands her fan and gloves? Which of all these things troubles or annoys me, or makes me blush? No—no, indeed! Speak, my heart—speak!—I appeal to you. I let you go at liberty. I scarcely know you, I have had so little time to consult you since my birth. I have not been used to contradiction. I abandoned to you the empire of my life, without examining the propriety of your impulses.

You have been crushed, poor heart; and now that conscience has subdued you, you dare live no longer; you know not what to say. Reply! arouse yourself, and make your choice! Well, you are silent. You will not choose amid what is open to you. No; you love Anzoleto no more? No, no;—then Albert calls you. You seem to say yes. And every day Consuelo left her window with a smile on her lips, and a calm and gentle light burning in her heart.

After the end of a month she wrote to Albert, with a calm head, very slowly, and almost feeling her pulse at every letter her hand traced:—

"I love you only. I am almost sure that I love you. Now, let me dream of the possibility of our union. Dream of it yourself, also. Let us contrive together on means neither to distress your father nor your mother, nor to become egotistical in becoming happy."

In this letter she enclosed a brief note to Count Christian, in which she told him how calmly she lived, and told him of the respite which the new plans of Porpora had left her. She requested that a means might be found to soothe Porpora, and asked for a reply in a month. She would then have one month to prepare the maestro, before the matters in Berlin should be decided on.

Consuelo, having sealed the two notes, put them on the table, and went to sleep. A delicious calm had filled her soul, and never for a long time had she enjoyed so calm and delicious a sleep. It was late when she awoke. She was anxious to see Keller, who had promised to come to see her at eight o'clock. It was nine, and as she dressed herself, Consuelo saw with terror that the letter was not where she had placed it. She looked every where for it, and went to see if Keller was not waiting for her in the antechamber. Neither Keller nor Haydn were there; and, as she was about to return to look again for it in her room, she saw Porpora approach her and look sternly at her.

"What are you looking for?" he said.

"A sheet of music I have lost."

"That is not true; you are looking for a letter."

"Maestro!"

"Be silent, Consuelo, you know not how to deceive as yet. Do not learn to do so."

"Maestro, what have you done with that letter?"

"Given it to Keller——"

"Why—why did you?"

"Because he came for it. You sent for him yesterday. You do not know how to deceive, Consuelo, or I have a more acute ear than you think."

"Again," said Consuelo, with emotion, "I ask you, what you have done with the letter?"

"I have told you. Do not ask me again. I think it very wrong that a young girl, honest as I think you are, should give letters to her hair-dresser. To prevent this man from entertaining an erroneous idea of you, I gave him the letters calmly, and bade him send them for you. He will not think you are concealing any guilty secret from you adopted father."

"Maestro, you are right—you did well. Forgive me."

"I do; let us talk of the matter no more."

"And—did you read the letter?" asked Consuelo, with a timid and suppliant expression.

"For what do you take me?" said Porpora, angrily.

"Forgive me," said Consuelo, kneeling before him, and seeking to take his hand; "let me open my heart to you——"

"Not a word more," said Porpora, repelling her. He then left the room, shutting the door loudly as he passed from it.

Consuelo hoped that this first storm having passed by, she might, by a decisive explanation, appease him. She felt that she had power enough to tell him all she thought, and flattered herself that she would hasten the issue of her plans: he, however, would hear no explanation, and his severity in relation to that was unalterable. Besides, he testified as much kindness to her as usual; and thenceforth exhibited more apparent mirth and gratification. From this Consuelo conceived a good augury, and waited impatiently for the answer from Riesenbergh.

Porpora had not read—he had burned Consuelo's letters without reading them—but had substituted for them another to Count Christian. He thought this prudent step had saved his pupil and preserved old Rudolstadt from a greater sacrifice than he was capable of. He fancied he had acted towards him like a faithful friend, and towards Consuelo like an energetic and kind father. He did not think he might have given Count Albert a death blow. He thought Consuelo had exaggerated matters—that the young man was neither so much in love nor so ill as they fancied. In fine, like all old men, he thought that love passes away, and that it kills no one.

CHAPTER XCI.

EXPECTING an answer which would never come, for Porpora had burned her letter, Consuelo continued her calm and studious life. Her presence attracted to Madame Wilhelmina's some very distinguished persons, whom she was pleased to see frequently. Among others, was Baron Frederick Trenck, with whom she felt a tone of sympathy. He had tact enough the first time he saw her, not to approach her like an old acquaintance, but to ask for an introduction, after he had heard her sing, as any delighted auditor might do. When she met this brave and handsome young man, who had so bravely rescued her from Mayer and his band, the impulse of Consuelo was to offer him her hand. The baron, who did not wish her to commit any imprudence on his account, took her hand respectfully, as if he were about to lead her back to her chair, and to thank her for her kindness, pressed it gently. She afterwards heard from Joseph, who gave him music lessons, that he always asked after her with interest, and spoke of her with admiration; but that, from a feeling of propriety, he never made any allusion to the motives of her disguise, the reasons for her adventurous voyage, and the nature of their feelings to each other.

"I do not know," said Joseph, "what he thinks, but I assure you he speaks of no woman in the world with more respect."

"If that be so," said Consuelo, "I authorise you to tell him all our history, and all my career, without, of course, mentioning the family of Rudolstadt. I wish to possess all the esteem of that man, to whom we are indebted for our lives, and who has, in every respect, acted so nobly towards me."

A few weeks afterwards, Von Trenck, having terminated his mission at Vienna, was suddenly recalled by Frederick, and came one day to the embassy to bid adieu to Korner. Consuelo was coming down the stairway, to go out, and met him in the portico. As they were alone, he took her hand and kissed it tenderly.

"Permit me," said he, "to express for the first and probably for the last time, in my life, the feelings with which my breast is filled. It needed not for Beppo to tell me your history, to be filled with veneration for you. There are faces which never deceive us, and one glance sufficed to enable me to see in you great power and nobleness of heart. Had I known at Passau that Joseph was so little on his guard, I would have protected you from the rudeness of Count Hoditz, the intentions of whom I could not but foresee, in spite of my efforts to make him understand that he toiled in vain, and would make himself ridiculous. Besides, Hoditz himself told me that you laughed at him, and he is as much obliged to you as possible for having kept his secret. I shall never forget the romantic adventure which procured me the happiness of your acquaintance, and which I shall never cease to reckon among the happiest events of my life, even though it cost me my future success and fortune."

"Think you, then, it is likely to have such results?"

"I trust not. Yet, in Prussia anything may happen."

"You make me tremble at the King of Prussia. But do not think, baron, that it is at all impossible that ere long I shall meet you. I may be engaged at Berlin."

"Indeed," said Trenck, and his face suddenly lighted up with an expression of joy. "God grant that this plan may be realized. At Berlin I can serve you, and you may rely on me as on a brother. Yes, Consuelo, I feel a brother's affection for you; and, were I untrammelled, would, perhaps, be unable to defend myself from a yet tenderer sentiment. You, too, are not free; and solemn eternal ties do not permit me to envy the happy gentleman who may ask for your hand. Whoever he be, madam, rely on the fact, that if he pleases, I will be his friend; and if he does not, that I will be his champion against the prejudices of the world. . . . Alas! Consuelo, I also have a terrible barrier between her I love and myself. The person, though, whom you love is a man, and can break down the barrier; while the one who is dear to me is a woman, without power, strength, or liberty to do so."

"With her, then, will it be impossible for me to do anything in your behalf," said Consuelo. "For the first time, I regret the impotence of my situation."

"Who knows?" said the baron, anxiously. "You may, perhaps, be more powerful than you think; at least, to lessen the horror of our separation. Will you not encounter some danger for me?"

"With the same pleasure that you exposed your life in my behalf."

"Well—I rely on you. Remember this promise, Consuelo. Perhaps I may recal this to you some day, unexpectedly."

"At whatever hour of my life you may do so, I will not be unmindful of it," said she, giving him her hand.

"Well," said he, "give me some token, some valueless pledge, that may, when the time comes, remind you of it: I have a presentiment that great contests await me, and a time may come, when my signature may compromise her and you."

"Will you take this sheet of music I was about to take to a pupil

of the maestro? I can easily get another, and on this I will make a mark to enable me, some day, to recognise it."

"Why not? A sheet of music is, perhaps, the thing most likely to be sent without awakening suspicion. That it may be of use to me more than once, I will separate the leaves. Make a mark on each of the pages."

Consuelo, leaning on the staircase, wrote the name of Bertonl on each leaf. The baron folded it up and carried it away, after having promised our heroine eternal friendship.

At this time, Madame Tesi became sick, and the performances at the Imperial Theatre were on the point of being suspended, for she had the most important *roles*. La Corilla had a right to insist on replacing her. She had great success both with the court and the people. Her beauty and coquetry turned the heads of all those simple German lords, no one observing that her voice was rather hoarse and that she was rather epileptic. Every handsome woman on the stage seemed a great artist to them. Her snowy shoulders uttered wonderful notes, her round and voluptuous tones sang always correctly, and her superb attitudes gave wonderful expression to the music. In spite of the pure musical taste, which was so highly extolled, all felt the influence of the fascination of her eye, and Corilla prepared in her boudoir many minds to be completely dragged away upon the stage.

She then presented herself boldly to sing *ad interim*, the *roles* of la Tesi; the difficulty was to find some one to replace her in her own. The seedy voice of Madame Holzbaüer put her out of the question. It was therefore necessary to employ Corilla or put up with something very commonplace. Porpora made the most unearthly efforts. Metastasio, extremely disconcerted with the Lombard pronunciation of Corilla, and indignant at the effort she made to depress all other *roles* than her own, (contrary to the spirit of the poem, and destroying all dramatic effect,) did not conceal his dissatisfaction, and his sympathy for the silent and intelligent Porporina. Caffariello was very assiduous in his court to Madame Tesi, and she, cordially detesting Corilla for having disputed with her the sceptre of beauty, was strenuous in favor of the employment of Consuelo. Holzbaüer was anxious that his management should succeed; but, terrified at the ascendancy Porporina would soon acquire if she had even the right of *entrée* into the green-room, did not know which way to look. The good conduct of Consuelo had gained her so many friends, that it would be difficult to impose any longer on the empress. In consequence of all these circumstances, offers were made to Consuelo. By offering a scandalously low price, it was hoped that she would be induced to decline them. Porpora, though, accepted them at once, as usual, without consulting her. One fine morning, therefore, Consuelo found herself engaged for six representations, without being able to decline, and without knowing why. After patiently waiting six weeks, she received no letter from the Rudolstadt. She was hurried by Porpora to the representation of Metastasio's *Antigone*, the music by Hasse.

Consuelo had already studied her part with Porpora. It was doubtless most disagreeable to the latter to teach his pupil the music of a rival composer, the most ungrateful of his pupils, and the rival he hated worse than any: it was necessary, though, to do so for the purpose of opening the door to his own compositions, and Porpora was too conscientious a professor, and too honest an artist, not to be zealous and careful as possible. Consuelo assisted him so zealously that

he was at once delighted and distressed. In spite of her wishes, she thought Hasse's music magnificent, and her soul seemed more delighted in the tender and passionate strains of the *Sassone*, than in the often naked and cold grandeur of Porpora. Accustomed, when she studied the other great masters, to give way to her own enthusiasm, she was now forced to repress it, when she saw the sadness of his brow, and his reverie after the lesson. When she went on the stage to rehearse with Caffariello and Corilla, though she knew her part very well, she felt such excitement that she could scarcely open the scene of *Ismene Berenice*, beginning:

"No tutto; O Berenice,
Tu non aprì il tuo cor," etc

To which Corilla replied:

"—E ti par poco
Quel che sai de' miei casi?"

At that place Corilla was interrupted by a burst of laughter from Caffariello. Turning round, with her eyes sparkling with rage, she said:—

"What is it that amuses you so much?"

"You are right, my Berenice," said Caffariello, laughing louder.

"You could say nothing more true."

"Do the words amuse you?" said Holzbaüer, who would have liked to tell Metastasio that the tenor laughed at his voice.

"The words are beautiful," said Caffariello drily, for he knew precisely the state of affairs. "They suit the case, however, so exactly that I could not but laugh."

He again laughed as he repeated to Porpora:—

"—E ti par poco
Quel che sai di tanti casi?"

Corilla saw this criticism referred to her morals, and, trembling with anger, hatred and fear, felt as if she could have torn Consuelo's eyes out. Her face was, however, so calm and gentle, that one dared not. Besides, in the dim light which fell on the stage, she paused as if she were struck with vague reminiscences, and strange terrors. She had never seen her by daylight, nor so closely, while at Venice. Amid the pains of childbirth, she had indistinctly seen the little Zingara Bertoni hovering confusedly around her, and did not understand her devotion. She now sought to recal her memories; but not succeeding in doing so, she stood for a moment under the influence of an uneasy sensation, which clung to her during the whole rehearsal. The manner in which Consuelo sang her part contributed not a little to her ill humor, and the presence of her old master, Porpora, who like a stern judge, heard her in silence, and almost in contempt, became a real punishment to her. Holzbaüer was not less mortified, when the maestro said his accompaniments cut across the voice, and he must have known it, having been present at the rehearsals Hasse had himself directed at Dresden, when the opera was first put on the stage. The need he had of a good adviser made him conceal his ill humor, and forced him to be silent. He conducted the whole rehearsal, taught each one what to do, and even corrected Caffariello, who pretended to submit, to induce others to do so. Caffariello had no object but to mortify the impertinent rival of Tesi, and he was willing to do anything for that gratification—even to submit and to

be modest. Artists and diplomats are, in this particular, alike in the theatre and in the council chamber—the most beautiful, and the reverse, find their causes in the most frivolous and trifling matters.

When she returned, after the rehearsal, Consuelo found Joseph most mysteriously joyful; and when they could speak together, she learned that the good canon had come to Vienna, and had immediately asked for his dear Beppo, of whom, while eating a good breakfast, he had asked a thousand things about that *dear lad*, Bertoni. They had contrived a way for him to become acquainted with Porpora, that he might see her openly, and without concealment. On the next day, the canon procured an introduction, as a protector of Joseph Haydn, a great admirer of Porpora, and under the pretence of coming to thank him for the lessons he had given to his young friend, Consuelo seemed to speak to him for the first time; and at night, the priest, Porpora and his two pupils all dined with the canon. Without pretending to a stoicism, which was not the want of musicians of any class of that age, Porpora could not but form a sudden affection for the good canon, who had so excellent a table, and was so excellent an admirer of his books. After dinner they had music, and subsequently they met every day.

This somewhat atoned for the uneasiness created by the silence of Albert. The canon loved enjoyments of a chaste, but at the same time, liberal character, and was, in relation to some matters, a fop, and in others just and enlightened. He was, in fact, an excellent friend, and a perfectly amiable man. His society animated and strengthened the maestro, whose manners became more gentle; and, consequently, the in-door life of Consuelo more agreeable.

One day, when they had no rehearsal, (it was the day before the representation of *Antigone*,) Porpora had gone into the country with a friend, the canon proposed to his young friends to visit the priory, to surprise those he had left there, and to ascertain, by falling like a bomb in the garden, if Angela was well taken care of, and if the gardener neglected the volkameria. The proposition was agreed to, and the canon's carriage filled up with *pates*, (for one could not travel four leagues without an appetite.) They came to their destination after having made a little détour, and left the carriage in order to make the surprise more complete.

The volkameria was in perfect condition; it was warm weather, and the roots were fresh. It had ceased to flower since the cold had set in, but its leaves hung without languor over the trunk. The hedge was well trimmed, and the blue chrysanthemums braved the winter, and seemed to smile under their glass shelters. Angela, at the breast of the nurse, was smiling also when she was excited by caresses, and the canon made up his mind that it was wrong to force her good humor, for to compel these frail creatures to smile often disposes them to a too nervous temperament.

They were all enjoying themselves in the garden house, the canon, wrapped up in his furred pelisse, was warming his shins before a large fire of dried branches and pine cones, Joseph was playing with the fine children of the gardener's handsome wife, and Consuelo sat in the centre of the room, with Angela in her arms, and was gazing at her with a mingled expression of tenderness and sorrow. It seemed to her that this child was rather hers than another's, and that a mysterious fatality united its delicate existence to her own, when the door suddenly opened, and la Corilla stood before her like an apparition evoked by her melancholy reverie.

For the first time since the day of her delivery, la Corilla had felt, if not a feeling of love, an attack of maternal remorse, and she came secretly to see her child. She knew that the canon was at Vienna and coming after him with the interval of half an hour, and not finding any marks of carriage-wheels near the priory, in consequence of his having made a *détour* before he came to the house, she entered furtively and unseen until she came to the gardener's house, where Angela's nurse lived, (she had informed herself of all this). She had laughed at the good canon's embarrassment and Christian resignation, but was utterly ignorant of the part Consuelo had taken in the matter. With mingled surprise and terror, then, she saw her rival, and not knowing nor daring to think what child she thus petted, she was about to turn on her heel and fly. Consuelo, though, by an instinctive movement, had clasped the child to her bosom, as the partridge hides her young when the kite hovers above them. Consuelo, who now was at the theatre, and who the next day might describe the under-plot of the drama she was playing, and even describe her manner, held her overpowered and fascinated, as if by a spell, nailed to the centre of the room.

La Corilla, though, was too consummate an actress not to regain her presence of mind in a very short time. It was her plan to prevent a humiliation by an insult; and to get herself in voice, began her part by an apostrophe in the Venetian dialect, the tone of which is short and hissing.

"Eh! pardieu! la Zingarella—this house seems a foundling hospital. Have you also come to seek for, or to leave one of yours? I see we run the same chances and risks. Our two children, beyond doubt, have the same father, our adventures dating from Venice at the same time. And I see with compassion that it was not to rejoin you as I thought that the handsome Anzoleto so brusquely abandoned me in the midst of his engagement at Venice last season."

"Madam," said Consuelo, very pale, but very calm, "had I been so unfortunate as to be to Anzoleto what you were, I would at least have had the reward of being a mother, (they must feel,) and my child would not be here."

"Ah! I understand," said Corilla, with a sombre glare in her eyes; "he would have been at the villa Zustiniani; you would have been able to do what I could not, persuade the dear count that honor forced him to recognise it. You had not, though, what you call the misfortune of being the mistress of Anzoleto, and Zustiniani left no proofs of his love with you. They say Joseph Haydn, Porpora's pupil, consoled you for all your misfortunes, and, beyond doubt, is the father of the child you hold in your arms."

"This child, madam, is your own," said Joseph, for he understood Italian very well, and advanced between Consuelo and Corilla, so that the latter shrank back. "Joseph Haydn assures you of the fact, having been present at its birth."

The face of Haydn, which Corilla had never seen since that unfortunate day, recalled all the events which she had before attempted to. The Zingara Bertoni appeared before her as the Zingarella Consuelo. A cry as of surprise escaped from her lips, and for a moment shame and pique contended for the ascendancy. Ill humor soon, though, returned to her heart and sneers to her lips. "Indeed, my children," said she, with an atrociously benignant air, "I have not forgotten you. You were each very good, before all these strange things hap-

pened, and Consuelo in her disguise was really a handsome lad. It was then in this holy house that she passed her time in devotion, dividing her hours between the precious canon and the good Joseph, since the time she left Venice? Well, Zingarella, let us not make each other uneasy. We know each other's secrets, and the empress, who wishes to know everything, will be able to blame neither the one nor the other."

"Suppose even I had a secret," said Consuelo, "you know nothing of it. I, however, learned yours, when I had a conversation of an hour's duration with the empress, three days, Corilla, before you made your engagement."

"And you sought to injure me?" said Corilla, becoming flushed with anger.

"Had I told her what I knew of you, your engagement never would have been made. If you are now employed, it is because I was unwilling to take an advantage of my opportunities."

"But why did you not? You must have been a great fool," said Corilla with a candor and perversity of heart, which were wonderful to see.

Consuelo and Joseph could not repress a smile as they heard her. Joseph's was full of contempt—that of Consuelo was angelic and looked to heaven.

"Yes, madam," said she, with overpowering gentleness, "I am foolish, as you say I am, and am glad of it."

"No! no! my child; for I have an engagement and you have not," said Corilla amazed and reckless. "They told me at Venice that you had no mind, and never could succeed. That is the only truth Anzoleto ever uttered about you. What then? that is not my fault. Had I been in your place, I would have told all I knew of la Corilla, and would have represented myself as a virgin and as a saint. The empress would have believed it, and I would have supplanted every rival."

At first contempt was more powerful than indignation. Consuelo and Haydn laughed loud and long, and la Corilla who, in becoming aware of what she called the impotence of her rival, lost the aggressive bitterness which had characterised her, drew up a chair near the fire, and sought to resume the conversation, for the purpose of sounding the strong and weak points of her adversaries. Just then her eye fell on the canon, whom she had not previously seen, because the latter, guided by an instinct of prudence peculiar to his profession, had by a gesture, bidden the fat nurse and her children to stand before him, until he should have gathered the purport of what was going on.

CHAPTER XCII.

AFTER the insinuation which she had uttered a few minutes previously, about the connections between Consuelo and the priest, the appearance of the latter had on Corilla almost the effect of the head of Medusa. She gradually, though, recovered her mind, when she reflected that she had spoken Venetian, and at once spoke to him in German, with that mixture of embarrassment and effrontery which

the characteristic of an immodest woman. The canon, ordinarily polished and polite in his own house, did not quit his seat and did not even return her salute. Corilla, who had asked about him in Vienna, had heard all say he was extremely well-bred, passionately fond of music, and absolutely incapable of lecturing a woman, especially a singer, severely. She had intended to go and see him and to fascinate him so that he would not be able to scold her. Though in matters of this kind, she had the kind of sense in which Consuelo was deficient, she had that negligence and disregard of propriety which is the consequence of disorder, idleness, and—though this may seem perhaps extravagant—evil deportment. In persons of gross organizations all these things are linked together. Weakness of body and mind make intrigue powerless, and Corilla, who had an instinctive perception of perfidy of every kind, had not often sufficient capacity to lead a plot to a successful termination. She had therefore postponed from day to day her visit to the canon; and when she found him so cold and stern, began to be visibly disconcerted.

Then seeking to resume her position by a *coup de main*, she said to Consuelo, who yet held Angela in her arms—"Well, why do you not suffer me to kiss my child and place it at his reverence's feet, that—"

"*Dame Corilla*," said the canon, in the dry and mocking tone in which he had previously said *Dame Bridget*, "suffer that child to be unmolested." Then speaking Italian with a great deal of elegance, though perhaps too slowly and with too much accent, he continued, without uncovering himself—"I have been listening to you for a quarter of an hour, and though not very familiar with your *patois*, I have heard enough to authorise me to say that you are the most impudent person of your sex I ever met with. I think, however, you are rather stupid than depraved, rather contemptible than dangerous. You have no idea of the beautiful, and it would be useless to seek to make you comprehend it. I have but one thing to say; this young girl, this virgin as you called her just now in derision, has been sullied by your having spoken to her, and you shall do so no more. The child you have given birth to shall not be sullied by your touch; so do not lay your hands on it. Consuelo has said, 'it is a holy thing,' and I know it is. Through her intercession I took charge of it, and did not fancy that the perverse instincts it inherited from you one day might make me repent having done so. We have been told that divine goodness gives to every being the power to know and practice virtue, and we have resolved to teach it what is right, and render it amiable and docile. Henceforth, then, do not look on this child as your own. You have abandoned it, and given it up. It does not belong to you. You have deposited a sum of money to pay for its education." He made a sign to the gardener's wife, who on an intimation from him a few minutes before, had taken a bag with a seal attached to it, from the chest. This was what Corilla had sent with her daughter to the priest, and which had never been opened. He took the bag and threw it at Corilla's feet. "We have nothing to do with that, nor do we wish to. Now I beg you to leave my house and never enter it again, under any possible pretext. On these conditions, and provided you will never open your mouth in relation to the circumstances which made me acquainted with you, we will promise the most absolute silence in relation to all that relates to you. If you act in any other manner I warn you; I have more means than you fancy, to inform her imperial majesty of the state of affairs; and you may

see the wreaths thrown at your feet on the stage and the applause of your admirers, changed into a sojourn of several years in a Magdalen convent."

When he had concluded, the canon arose and by a sign bade the nurse take the child, and Consuelo and Joseph go to the other end of the room. He then pointed out the door to Corilla, who, terrified, pale, and trembling, left convulsively and half-crazed, without knowing whither she went or what had happened.

During this kind of imprecation the canon felt like an honest man who gradually had from indignation become terribly excited. Consuelo and Joseph had never before seen him angry. A priest though, never loses the habit of command, and the air of royal rule which passes into the blood and which in an instant betrayed the bastard of Augustus II., covered the canon, perhaps unknown to himself, with a kind of irresistible majesty.

La Corilla, to whom, perhaps, no man had ever spoken in such terms of austere truth before, felt more terror and alarm than her most furious lovers had ever inspired in their wildest displays of fury and revenge. An Italian, and therefore superstitious, she was terrified at the priest and his anathema, and fled through the garden while the canon, exhausted by an effort so contrary to his habit of enjoyment and pleasure, fell back on his chair pale and exhausted.

All hurried to his assistance, though Consuelo looked after the trembling and vacillating steps of Corilla. She saw her fall at the end of the alley on the grass, either from having trembled in her trouble, or because her strength could no longer support her. Led away by her kindness, and finding the scene which had passed too great for her powers, she left the canon in charge of Joseph, and ran to aid her rival, who was suffering from a violent nervous attack. Unable to soothe her, and not daring to bring her back to the priory, she sought to keep her from falling and digging her hands in the ground. Corilla was perfectly insane for some time, but when she recognised the person who had come to her assistance, and who wished to soothe her, she became at once quiet and her face assumed a bluish pallor. Her lips became fixed and remained silent, and her icy eyes were fixed on the ground, as if she dared not lift them. She suffered herself passively to be taken to the carriage which waited for her, and was assisted into it by her rival without speaking a word. "You are very ill," said Consuelo, terrified at the change of her expression. "Let me go with you for some distance, I can easily return on foot." Corilla said nothing, but repulsed her brusquely, with an expression it was impossible to interpret. Suddenly sobbing aloud, she hid her face in one hand, and with the other bade the coachman drive on, at the same time putting down the blind between her and her generous enemy.

On the next day, at the last rehearsal of *Antigone*, Consuelo was at her post, and waited for Corilla to begin. The latter sent her servant to say that she would come in half an hour. Caffariello was loud in his curses, and said he was not subject to the orders of such a creature, at the same time acting as if he would leave at once. Madame Tesi, though pale and ill, wished to witness this rehearsal, for the purpose of laughing at la Corilla's expense. She had caused a property sofa to be brought and placed at the O. P. entrance, painted like a curtain, gathered up in the back in what in French stage language is known as *manteau d'arlequin*. She soothed her friend, and insisted

on waiting for la Corilla, fancying that she delayed coming only because she was unwilling to see her. At last la Corilla came, more pale and languid even than Madame Tesi herself, who seemed to revive when she saw her in this condition. Instead of throwing off her cloak and hood with the great airs which she was used to put on, she sat on the throne at the back of the stage and spoke thus to Holzbaüer, "Mr. Manager, I assure you that I am very sick, that I have no voice, and have passed a terrible night—" (With whom?" said Tesi, languidly to Caffariello.) I cannot, therefore, go through to-morrow's rehearsal, unless I resume the *role* of Ismene, and you give that of Berenice to another person."

"What, madam?" said Holzbaüer, as if he had been stricken down by a thunderbolt. "Is it on the eve of the production of an opera, when the court has appointed the hour, you tell us of such a misfortune? Is it possible. I can consent to it under no circumstances—"

"You must," said she in her natural voice, which was far from mild. "I am engaged for second parts, and there is nothing to oblige me to undertake the first. From kindness alone I undertook to replace la Signora Tesi, and also for the purpose of preventing any interruptions to the pleasures of the court—now I am too ill to keep my promise, and you cannot make me sing unless I please."

"My dear, you will be made to sing *by order*. If you sing badly, we will be prepared for it. This is a small misfortune compared with those you have met with during your life. It is too late, though, for you to repent. You have presumed too much on your resources. You will make a *fiasco*; that is nothing to us. I will sing so that people shall forget there is such a personage as Berenice—La Porporina also as Ismene will reward the public, and all but you will be satisfied. This will be a lesson by which you can profit, and which will never happen to you again."

"You are much mistaken about the reason why I refuse," said la Corilla. "Were I not sick I would sing the part perhaps as well as another. As, though, I cannot, there is one here who will sing it as well as it ever has been sung in Vienna, and she will be able to do it to-morrow. The opera then will not be postponed, and I will resume cheerfully the role of Ismene, which does not fatigue me."

"Do you think that Madame Tesi will be well enough to-morrow to sing her own part?"

"I know perfectly well that Madame Tesi will not be able to sing for a long time," said la Corilla, speaking so that the former could hear her voice distinctly. "See how she is changed! Her appearance is terrible. I said, though, you had a perfect Berenice—one who is incomparable and superior to all others. Here she is," said she, rising and placing her hand in Consuelo's for the purpose of drawing her amid the agitated group which stood around herself.

"Do you mean me?" said Consuelo, who fancied that she dreamed.

"I mean you," said Corilla, forcing her convulsively to the throne—"Now, Porporina, you are queen. You have the highest rank. I placed you in that position, for I owed you that atonement. Do not forget it."

In his distress, Holzbaüer, on the very eve of failing, and being forced to resign, could not refuse the aid which was tendered him. From the manner in which Consuelo sang Ismene, he saw clearly

enough that she could sing Berenice in a most superior manner. In spite of his dislike to her and Porpora, he now had but one apprehension, that she would not play the part.

She seriously protested that she would not, and cordially clasping Corilla's hands, besought her not to make a sacrifice which did herself so little good, at the same time that, to her rival, it was the most terrible expiation and the most abject atonement which could be imposed on her. Corilla was fixed in her determination. Madame Tesi, terrified at the danger which menaced her, was anxious to try her voice, and resume her *role*, even if she died immediately after, for she was really ill; she did not, though, dare to do so. At an imperial theatre of those days, artistes could not be so capricious as the good-humored sovereign of our times, the *public*, permits them to indulge in. The court expected to see a new Berenice: it had been announced, and the empress relied on it.

"Come," said Caffariello to Consuelo, "make up your mind at once."

On this occasion, for the first time in her life, Consuelo showed that which had been all through her life la Corilla's characteristic. Let us record it.

"I do not know the part—I never studied it," said Consuelo. "I will not be able to learn it by to-morrow."

"You have heard it. You know it, therefore," said Porpora, in a voice of thunder, "you will sing it to-morrow. Come, no more grimaces, and let all this pretence end.—Mr. Director let the violins strike up.—You, Berenice, take your place; no sheet of music when a *role* has been read thrice—it should be known by heart—I say you know it."

"No, tutto, O Berenice,"

Sang Corilla, resuming the *role* of Ismene,—

"Tu non aprì il tuo cor."

"And now," thought Corilla, who estimated Consuelo's pride by her own, "*all she knows of me will seem trivial.*"

Consuelo, whose prodigious memory and power of acquisition, Porpora was well acquainted with, sang her *role*, music and words, without any hesitation. Madame Tesi was so much amazed at her words and play that she became much worse, and went home before the rehearsal of the second act. On the next day Consuelo had prepared her dress, and the little points of her part, and gone over all the music, with attention, by five o'clock. Her success was complete, and the empress said, as she left the theatre, "That is an admirable young girl, and I must find her a husband; I will think of it."

On the next day, she began to rehearse the *Zenobia* of Metastasio, with words by Predieri. Corilla yet insisted on her taking the first part, and on this occasion Madame Holzbauer took the second. As she was a better artist than Corilla, this opera was much better studied than the other.

Metastasio was delighted to see that his poetry, which during the wars had been neglected, returning into favor at court, and becoming the rage in Vienna. He no longer thought of his wrongs; and pressed by the kindness of the empress and the duty of his office to write new operatic dramas, he prepared himself by the study of the Greek and Latin classics, to produce one of those *chef d'œuvres*

which the Italians of Vienna and the Germans of Italy placed boldly, and at once, above the tragedies of Corneille, Racine, Shakspeare, Calderon, and every one else, to have the pleasure of telling him so to his face, without blushing at it.

Not in this part of the book, which has already become too long and discursive, will we exhaust yet more the reader's patience, which ere now has been perhaps worn out, by telling him what we think of Metastasio. We will only repeat what Consuelo whispered to Joseph.

"My dear Beppo, you cannot conceive how difficult it is to play those *roles*, said to be so sublime and pathetic. True, the words are well arranged, and flow easily from the tongue in singing, but when one thinks of the personage, I do not see where not only emotion but a serious face is to be found in pronouncing them. What a strange fancy then it is to make antiquity act according to the sentiment of to-day, and represent intrigues, passions, and moral thoughts, which perhaps in the memoirs of Baron Trenck, the Margrave of Bareith, and the Princess of Culmbach, would not be out of place, but which are nonsense in the lips of Berenice, and Arsinoë. When I was getting well at the Giants' Castle, Count Albert used often to read me to sleep, as he thought. I did not sleep, though, but heard every word. He read to me the Greek tragedies of Eschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides slowly, but with distinctness and without hesitation, having the Greek text before him. He understood the ancient and modern tongues so thoroughly that it seemed an admirably well made translation. He made it extremely faithful, he said, because he wished me to see, in the scrupulous exactness of his rendering, the extreme simplicity of the Greek genius. My God! what grandeur, and what images, what poetry, and soberness of diction! what pure and strong characters! what energetic situations! what deep and true agony! what lacerating and terrible scenes he displayed to me! I was yet feeble, and with my imagination still under the influence of the violent excitement which had produced my attack, I was overpowered by what I heard, and fancied myself, as I heard Antigone, Clytemnestra, Medea or Alectra, and that really and personally, I figured in those bloody dreams—not in the theatre looking at the foot-lights—but in the terrible solitude, amid gaping caverns, neath the columns of antique temples, or by the dreary hearth where the dead were wept for while vengeance was plotted against the living. I heard the sad chorus of the Trojan women, and of the Dardan captives. The Eumenides danced around me to what strange rhythm and to what infernal modulation. I cannot now think of it without a recollection of pleasure and terror, which makes me yet tremble. I shall never have on the stage, in the realization of my dreams, the same emotions and power which at that time filled both my heart and head. Then I became aware that I was a tragedienne, forming conceptions of which no actress had furnished me a model. Then I comprehended the drama, tragic effect, and theatrical poetry. As Albert read, I improvised in my own mind a chant in which I followed all I heard. I sometimes caught myself in the attitude and with the physiognomy of the persons who spoke; and he often paused with terror fancying that an Andromache or Ariadne lay before him. Ah,—I learned and acquired more in the course of one month than I shall in a lifetime of Metastasio's dramas. If the composers had not inspired the music with the sentiment and truth which is so deficient in the plot, I fancy I would die of disgust at the Grand-Duchess Zenobia, speaking with

the Landgrave Egle, and hearing Field-Marshal Rhadamistus disputing with Zopyrus, a Cornet of Pandours. Oh! all this is false, false as possible, my poor Beppo; false as our costumes are, false as the powdered wig of Caffariello Tiridates, as a Pompadour undress of Madame Holzbäuer in an Armenian pastoral; like the rose-colored stockings of Prince Demetrius; and these scenes which look as much like Asia as Metastasio is like Homer."

"What you say," said Haydn, "explains to me why, when I write operas for the stage, if I ever reach such a climax, I feel less inspiration than when I write oratories. There the puerile artifices of the stage never contradict the truth of sentiment, in that symphonic circle where sentiment is everything and all is music—where the soul is uttered to the ear and not to the eye—it seems to me that the composer may expound all revealed to him, and lead the hearer into regions truly exalted."

As she spoke thus, Joseph and Consuelo were waiting for the company to come to rehearsal, and were walking up and down the long back scene, which at night was to represent the river Araxes, but which by day-light seemed only a vast band of indigo, with here and there a spot of ochre, to represent the mountains of Caucasus. Every one knows that these back scenes are placed the one in front of the other, so as to be rolled up on a cylinder, whenever the scene changes. In the interval which separates them from each other, the actors during the rehearsal walk to and fro; scene-shifters lie down and exchange snuff-boxes, while the oil from badly secured lamps falls on them. During the day, the actors walk up and down these dark passages, repeating the words of their parts, or talking of their business matters. Sometimes they hear little conversations not intended for them, or ascertain the secrets of others, between whom and themselves hangs a whole gulf, or a public sea.

Luckily, Metastasio was not on the other shore of the Araxes, while the inexperienced Consuelo thus uttered her artistic indignation to Haydn. The rehearsal began. It was the second time Zenobia had been called, and all passed off so well that the musicians in the orchestra applauded, as they are in the habit of doing, by tapping with their bows on the tops of their violins. The music of Predieri was charming, and Porpora conducted it with an enthusiasm that of Hasse could not call forth. The character of Tiridates was one of Caffariello's triumphs, and he did not complain that a dress had been prepared like that which would not be out of place in an opera, taken from the story of Celadon, and Clytander. If Consuelo thought her role not at all consonant with that of her heroine of antiquity, she was at least satisfied that it was really feminine. In a manner it recalled to her the situation in which she had been placed between Albert and Anzoletto. Completely oblivious of all the localities, and thinking to represent merely human sentiments, she felt that in this air she was sublime—

"Voi legete in ogni cor,
Voi sapete, O i giusti Dei,
Se non puri, voti miei,
Se innocente e la pletta."

At that moment she felt conscious of a deserved triumph and of true emotion; she needed only the look of Caffariello, who on that occasion was not restrained by the glance of la Tesi, and who really admired her, to confirm what she was already sensible of, the certainty

of producing on every one, under all possible conditions, the greatest effect with this *morceau*. She was thus reconciled to her part—satisfied with the opera, with herself, and, in one word, with the theatre. In spite of the imprecations she had uttered but a moment before, she could not resist one of those sudden palpitations which are so profound, unexpected and powerful, that it is impossible for any one not an artist to understand what centuries of labor, deception and suffering can be atoned for in an hour.

CHAPTER XCIII

As a pupil and half servant of Porpora, Haydn, who was fond of music, and was anxious to study even under a material point of view the *consistency* of operas, obtained permission to go behind the scenes when Consuelo sang. For a few days he observed that Porpora, who had at first been ill disposed to admit him behind the scenes, authorised him to come even before he ventured to ask leave. Something new had suggested itself to the maestro. Maria Theresa, while speaking of music to the Venetian ambassador, had returned to her fixed *matrimo-mania*. She told him how glad she would be to see this great singer fixed at Vienna as the wife of her teacher's pupil, Haydn. She asked the ambassador about the latter, of whom he spoke highly, assuring her that he had great musical capacities, and moreover that he was an excellent Catholic. Her majesty asked him to bring about the marriage, and promised to give the young couple a household. The idea seemed very suitable to Korner, who was fond of Joseph, to whom he had already made an allowance of sixty-two francs a month to enable him to commence his musical studies without difficulty. This plan the ambassador urged on Porpora, who, fearing that Consuelo would persist in her idea of marrying a gentleman and leaving the stage, after much hesitation and resistance, (he wished his pupil to remain unloving and unmarried,) was at last persuaded. To make a decided impression, the ambassador had determined to show him Haydn's compositions, and to tell him that the trio-serenade he expressed such a high opinion of, was by Beppo. Porpora had confessed that Haydn had the germ of great capacity, that he could give it a good direction, and aid him to write for the voice; in fine, that a singer married to a composer might be extremely lucky. The youth of the pair, and their small means, made industry a matter of necessity, and Consuelo would thus be bound to the theatre. The maestro yielded. He, like Consuelo, had received no reply from Riesenbourg. This silence made him apprehend some resistance to his plans, some scheme of the young count. "If I can marry," said he, "or at least promise Consuelo to another, I shall have nothing to fear in that quarter."

The difficulty lay in inducing Consuelo to consent. Persuasion would have the effect of inducing her to resist. With his Neapolitan wit, he came to the conclusion that the force of circumstances must bring about a change in her mind. She liked Beppo; and though he had subdued his passion for her, he exhibited too much zeal and devotion for Porpora, to imagine that he was not deeply in love. He thought that by not interfering with their association, he would give

him the means of inducing her to accede to his wishes. That by gradually informing him of the empress's wishes and of his own consent, he would inspire him with courage, eloquence, and persuasion. He therefore ceased at once his tyranny and brutality, and gave a free vent to the expansion of their fraternal devotion, flattering himself that things would come right more certainly than if he interfered directly with them.

Porpora, in not entertaining any doubt of success, committed a great error. He exposed Consuelo's fair fame to slander; for it was only necessary for Joseph to be seen behind the scenes twice with her, to dispose all the people of the theatre to proclaim far and wide the existence of an amour. Poor Consuelo, confiding and unsuspecting, as chaste, pure hearts ever are, had no suspicion of the danger, and therefore could take no precaution against it. Therefore on the day after this rehearsal of Zenobia, eyes were on the watch and tongues were busy at every entrance; behind every scene, there was between the actors, chorus, and employées of all degrees, a malignant or kind observation, fault-finding or benevolent, about the scandal of this intrigue, or the open avowal of the mutual understanding.

Consuelo, fully occupied by her part, thinking only of her part and artistic emotions, heard and foresaw nothing. Haydn, who was a dreamer, and was always enwrapped by the opera being sung, and the one he meditated in his musical mind, heard here and there some remarks which he did not understand, so far was he from flattering any vain hope. When, as he passed, he heard any equivocal remark, any piquant observation, he looked up, cast his eyes around him, glanced at the victim of this satire, and if he did not see her, resumed his contemplation.

Between each act of the opera there was a *buffa* interlude: on this occasion was to be performed *l'Impressario delle Canarie*, a collection of gay and very amusing scenes, by Metastasio. La Corilla, who played the part of a whimsical, perverse and absolute prima-donna, was perfect; and her success in this trifle consoled her for the sacrifice of the great part of Zenobia. During the rehearsal of this piece, and while waiting for the third act to be called, Consuelo, who was somewhat worried by her part, went behind the back scene, between the horrible valley, overhung by mountains and precipices, which was the first decoration, and the good river Araxes, on the banks of which were the most beautiful hills, which were to appear in the third set to delight the sensible spectator. She walked to and fro rather rapidly, when Joseph brought her fan, which she had left on the prompter's table, and which she used with much satisfaction. The instinct of his heart, and the intentional pre-occupation of Porpora, led Joseph mechanically to his friend's side; and from their habit of confidence and want of reserve, Consuelo received him joyously. In this double sympathy, at which not even the angels in heaven would have blushed, destiny resolved to find the commencement of strange misfortunes. We are well satisfied that women who read romances, and who are always anxious to come to the end, will at once be eager to know what. We must beg them, though, to be patient.

"Well, my friend," said Joseph, smiling, and offering Consuelo his hand, "it seems to me you are no longer so dissatisfied with the drama of our illustrious abbe, and that you found your 'prayer'—an open window, through which the demon of your genius will henceforth contrive to soar."

"Then you think I sung well?"

"Do you not see my eyes are red?"

"You wept, yes. That is well; I am satisfied with having made you do so."

"As if it were the first time. You are an artist, though, Consuelo, as Porpora wishes. The fire of success is enkindled in you. When you sang in the depths of the Böhmer-wald, you saw me weep, and did so too, to keep me company, touched by the very beauty of your own song. Now all is changed, and you quiver with pleasure at my tears. Courage, Consuelo, you are now a prima-donna, in the fullest sense of the term."

"Do not say so my beloved. I shall never be like her." As she spoke, she pointed to Corilla, who was then singing on the stage, just in front of the back scene.

"Do not be angry; I mean to say that the god of inspiration has conquered you. It is in vain that your cold reason, your austere philosophy, and your memory of Riesenburg have contended against the spirit of Python. He now occupies and overwhelms you. Confess that you are overcome with pleasure. I feel your arm tremble in mine, your face is animated, and I never before saw you look as you do now. No, you were not more agitated or inspired when Count Albert read you the Greek tragedies."

"What a wrong you do me," said Consuelo, growing pale, and at the same time withdrawing her arm from Joseph's. "Why do you utter that name here? It is holy, and should not be breathed in this temple of folly. It is a terrible name, which, like a thunderbolt, dispels at night all the illusions and phantoms of golden dreams."

"Well, Consuelo, do you wish me to tell you the truth?" Haydn after a moment's hesitation said. "You can never make up your mind to marry that man."

"Hush, hush! I promised to do so."

"Well, if you keep your promise you can never be happy with him. You leave the theatre? give up your artist life? It is too late. You have tasted a pleasure, the absence of which would torment your existence."

"I am afraid of you, Beppo. Why say such things to-day?"

"I do not know; and I speak almost under compulsion, as it were; I think when we go home I will write something sublime. What I will write will perhaps be very commonplace, but for a quarter of an hour I will be full of genius."

"How gay, how tranquil you are, while I, amid this fever of pride and glory of which you speak, experience bitter grief, and wish at the same time to laugh and cry."

"You suffer—I am sure you must. At the very time you feel your power ready to burst forth, a sad thought seizes and chills you."

"Yes it is the case—and why?"

"It means that you are an artist, and that you have made a duty, an obligation abominable in the eyes of God, and hateful to yourself—I mean the renunciation of art."

"It seemed yesterday not to be so, but to-day it does. The reason is, that my nerves are out of order, and that agitation has always a bad effect on me. I always dreamed that they controlled or influenced me. I had always gone on the stage with calmness and with careful and modest attention. To-day all is changed, and were I now to go on the stage it seems to me I would commit some sublime folly or ex-

travagance The reins of my will escape from my control. To-morrow I trust this will not be the case, for my emotion approximates nearly to delirium and agony."

"My poor friend, I fear this will always be the case, or rather I hope so, for your power exists in this emotion alone. I have heard from every musician and actor I ever met, that but for this delirium or trouble they were powerless, and that instead of being calmed by age, they always became more impassioned to every embrace of their demon."

"This is a great mystery," said Consuelo, with a sigh. "It seems to me that the vanity and jealousy of others, the base craving for success, cannot to-morrow so completely change my being. No; I assure you, when singing Zenobia's prayer, and the duo with Tiridates, the passion and power of Caffariello bore me along on the wings of a tempest as it were. I did not think of the public, nor of my rivals, not even of myself. I was Zenobia; I thought of the immortal gods of Olympus with a truly Christian fervor, and was filled with love for good Caffariello, whom, after the *ritornella*, I could not look at without a smile. All this is strange, and I begin to think the dramatic art is a perpetual lie, and that God punishes us by madness, making us really believe what we seek to impose on others with. No, it is not permitted to man to abuse all the passions and emotions of real life, and make a sport of them. He wishes us to keep our souls pure and holy for true affections. When we violate this wish He strikes and punishes us."

"God—God—the will of God; yes, Consuelo, there is the mystery; who can penetrate His designs in relation to us? Would he give us from our very cradle those instincts of art, which no passion can stifle, if he forbade the use we are called to make of them? Why, in my very childhood, did I dislike the sports of my companions? Why, as soon as I became my own master, did I study music with a diligence from which nothing could divert me, and an assiduity which would have killed any other child of my age? Rest was wearying to me, and from toil I obtained energy. So, too, was it with you, Consuelo. You have told me a hundred times, when we listened to each other's story, that we might almost fancy we heard our own. So the hand of God is in everything, and all power, all inclination, is His work, even when we do not see the object. You are born artistic, and you must follow the behest of your organization. Whoever interferes with it will inflict on you a more terrible death than that of the tomb."

"Beppo," said Consuelo, terrified and almost unconscious, "if you were really my friend I know what you would do."

"What, dear Consuelo? Is not my very life yours?"

"You would kill me to-morrow, when the curtain fell, when I was become truly an artist, really inspired, for the first and last time."

"Ah!" said Joseph, with a sad gayety, I had rather kill Count Albert or myself."

At that time Consuelo turned toward the wing, which opened directly in front of her, and looked at it with an expression of most melancholy thought.

The interior of a large theatre by daylight presents so different an appearance from that it wears when seen from the front, and by night, that it is impossible for one who has not seen it to form any idea of it. Nothing is more sad or sombre than the dark hall, deserted and silent. Were any human form to show itself distinctly to the boxes,

closed like vaults, it would seem a spectre, and make the oldest actor shrink back. The faint melancholy light, which penetrates from the windows in the roof of the back of the stage, glances across rude scaffolding and dusty beams and planks. On the stage, stripped of all perspective, the eye is amazed at the narrow space in which so many persons and passions are represented, and where they feign majestic motion, imposing crowds, irrepressible outbreaks to the spectator's eye, but which are calculated and meted out, line by line, to avoid confusion together, or contact with the fixtures. If the stage seems narrow and contracted, the height of the building destined to contain all these decorations, and to move all these machines, seems immense, when separated from all hangings, festooned clouds, the architectural cornices, and the green bows, which occupy so much of the space before the spectator. In its real disproportion, this height seems austere, and in looking on the stage one feels as if in a dungeon; in looking upward, one feels as if in some gothic church, either ruined or unfinished, for all around is rough, shapeless, fantastic, and incoherent. Ladders in disorder, just where the machinist needs them, thrown against others half indistinct amid the confusion, masses of plank, roughly sawed, decorations turned wrong side out, without any meaning, cords mingled together, like hieroglyphics. Numberless fragments, pulleys, wheels, which seem to belong to some unknown instrument of torture, resemble one of the dreams which visit us just before we wake, in which, amid our efforts to awake, we see the most incomprehensible things. All is vague and floating, and everything seems out of place. We see a man quietly at work on a rafter, which seems supported by spiders' threads, and might almost seem a sailor, grasping the rope of a vessel, or a gigantic rat, gnawing at worm-eaten planks. We hear words from we know not whence. They are eighty feet above, and the whimsical echoes filling all the corners of the strange dome, distinct or confused, as you pass to right or left, sound mysterious indeed. A terrible noise shakes the scaffolding, and is prolonged with a distinct hiss. Is the roof falling? Has one of these frail balconies been shattered and thrown down? No, it is only a sleeping scene-shifter, or a cat in search of a mouse, leaping across precipices and labyrinths hanging in air. Before you grow used to these objects and these noises you are afraid. You do not know what is the matter, and against what apparitions to be prepared. You understand nothing, and what neither the senses nor the mind comprehends, what is uncertain and unknown, always alarms the logic of the senses. The only thing we can understand when we penetrate for the first time this chaos is, that we are about to witness some wild revelry of a mysterious alchemy.

Consuelo, then, lost in thought, suffered her eyes to wander over the strange edifice, and the poetry of this disorder for the first time revealed itself to her. At each extremity of the passage formed by the two scenes was a dark passage, up and down which, from time to time, figures moved like shadows. Once she saw one of these shadows pause, as if to speak to her, and thought she saw a gesture made to attract her attention.

"Is that Porpora?" she asked Joseph.

"No," said i.e. "Probably some one sent to tell you the third act is about to begin."

Consuelo increased her pace and walked towards the figure, the features of which she could not distinguish. When, though, about

three paces from it, and when about to question it, the figure passed rapidly behind, down the next wing, and went behind all the scenes to the back of the stage.

"That person seems to have been eavesdropping," said Joseph.

"He seems to have hidden himself," added Consuelo who had noticed the haste with which he avoided being seen. I know not why, but I am afraid."

She went on the stage and rehearsed the last act, towards the end of which she again felt the enthusiasm she had previously experienced. When she wanted to put on her cloak to leave, she was dazzled by a sudden light, a window above having been opened, and the sun-light falling immediately before her. The contrast of this with the previous darkness, for a moment blinded her, and she walked two or three steps at hazard, and suddenly met in the wing the same person in the black cloak who had previously made her uneasy. She saw him confusedly, yet seemed to recognise him. She uttered a cry, and rushed towards him; but he had already gone, and she could not find him.

"What is the matter?" said Joseph, handing her her cloak. Have you struck against any of the scenes? Are you hurt?"

"No," said she; "but I have seen Count Albert."

"Count Albert here?—are you sure? Is it possible?"

"It is—it is certain," said Consuelo, leading him away. She then began to pass up and down the wings, and looked into every recess. Joseph assisted her in the search, though he was satisfied she was mistaken, while Porpora called impatiently for her to come home. Consuelo found no one in the least like Albert, and when she was compelled to go with the maestro, she saw all the persons who had been on the stage pass before her, several of whom wore cloaks, not unlike the one which had attracted her attention.

"It matters not," said she to Joseph, in a low tone, "but I saw him."

"It is an ocular delusion," said Haydn. "Had Count Albert been there, he would have spoken, and you tell me that he fled twice as you approached him."

"I cannot say it was really he; and as you say, Joseph, "it was a vision, perhaps. Oh! I wish to leave at once, to go to Bohemia. I am sure he is in danger and needs me."

"I see that among other things, dear Consuelo, he has communicated his madness to you. Regain your senses, I beseech you, and be assured if Count Albert be in Vienna, he will come to see you before the day pass over your head."

This hope revived Consuelo, and she increased her pace with Beppo, leaving Porpora behind her, not out of humor at the idea of being left alone by her on this occasion. Consuelo, though, thought neither of Beppo nor the maestro. She hurried home, and, all panting, ran to her room, where she found no one. Joseph afterwards asked if any one had enquired for them during their absence. The servants answered that no one had done so. Consuelo waited anxiously all day long, but to no purpose. At evening, and up to a late hour at night, she carefully examined all who passed or crossed the street. She seemed, ever and anon, to see some one come to the door and pause, but these persons always passed by, singing or coughing, until they became lost in the distance. Consuelo, satisfied that she had a waking dream, went to sleep; and, on the next day, the impression being dissipated, she confessed to Joseph, that, in fact, she had recog-

aised none of the features of the person in question. The general appearance of his form, the fashion and style of the mantle, a pale face, and something dark beneath the chin, which might be either a beard or the shadow of the hat, deeply defined in the fitful light of the theatre, had sufficed to persuade her that she saw Count Albert.

"If such a man as he whom you have so often described to me, had been in the theatre," said Joseph, "there are so many people moving about that his negligée air, his long beard, and his black hair would have attracted attention—now, I have asked every one, even the door-keepers, who admit no person without knowing and receiving authority to do so, and no stranger has been seen to-day."

"Well, then, it is certain that I dreamed—I was beside myself. I was thinking of Albert, and his shadow came. Some one stood before me whom I thought to be him. My head has become very weak. I am certain that I wept in the bottom of my heart, and something very extraordinary has happened; and something also absurd."

"Think no more of it," said Joseph, "and do not weary yourself with fancies. Go over your part, and think of that to-night."

CHAPTER XCIV.

DURING the day, Consuelo, from her windows, saw a strange troupe defile towards the square. They were rough-looking, healthy, and robust men, with long moustaches, and straps of leather bound round their bare legs, like the old buskins; they had on their heads pointed hats, and in their belts four pistols. Their arms were bare to the elbows, and in their hand was a long Albanian carbine. Over all this was a long red cloak.

"Is this a masquerade?" asked Consuelo of the canon, who had come to visit her; "we are not in the carnival, I think."

"Look at these men," said the canon, "for it will be long before we see them again, if God wills to perpetuate Maria Theresa's reign. See with what curiosity the people look at them, though; in their faces you may see something of disgust and terror. Vienna, in its days of anguish and distress, has received them more kindly than she does now."

"Are these Slavonian brigands, of whom we heard so much in Bohemia, where they have done so much mischief?"

"Yes; they are the fragments of the famous Croatian bandits, whom the celebrated cousin Francis of your friend Frederick Von Trenck, made free, and reduced to the most absolute subjection, so as to make them almost regular troops in Maria Theresa's service. Look! there is that terrible hero, Trenck, with the burnt neck, as our soldiers call him: this famous partisan, the shrewdest, coldest, the most useful of the warlike years which have passed by, the greatest boaster and robber of his age, beyond doubt, but also the most robust, the most active, and fabulously brave of modern days. That is Trenck, the Pandour, the savage chief of a band as savage as himself."

Francis Von Trenck was even taller than his cousin Frederick. He was six feet high, and his scarlet cloak, fastened to his neck by a ruby

brooch, covered a whole museum of Turkish artillery, set with gems, of which his belt was the arsenal. Pistols, crooked sabres, and cutlasses; nothing was wanting to give him the air of a most skilful stager. As a cap ornament he wore a little scythe of gold, four blades of which overhung his brow. His aspect was horrible; the explosion of a barrel of gunpowder had disfigured and given him a diabolical aspect. One could not look at him without a shudder, said all the memoirs of the day.

"That then is the monster, the enemy of humanity," said Consuelo, looking back with horror. "Bohemia will long recall his march—cities burned and sacked, old women cut to pieces, and women outraged. The fields exhausted by contributions, harvests ruined, flocks destroyed, when they could not be driven off—ruin, desolation, fire and waste everywhere. Poor Bohemia! ever the rendezvous of battle, theatre of every tragedy!"

"Yes; poor Bohemia! victim of all fury, arena of all contests," said the canon, resuming the conversation, "Francis Von Trenck has renewed the sad excesses of John Ziska. Unconquered, like him, he gave no quarter, and the terror of his name was so great that his advance-guard has often taken places while his main body was fighting four miles off. Of him may be said as of Attila, 'that the grass never grew where his horse's hoof had stood.' The conquered will curse him to the fourth generation."

The Pandour leader was soon lost in the distance; but Consuelo and the cannon continued to see defile before him his magnificently caparisoned horses which his gigantic Croat Hussars led by the bridle.

"What you see is, as it were but a spangle of his wealth. Mules and wagons, loaded with arms, pictures, gems, ingots of gold and silver, are perpetually seen on the roads to his estates in Slavonia. There he keeps that treasury which could pay a king's ransom thrice. He dines from the gold service he took from the King of Prussia, at Soran, where the king himself was so near being taken. Some say he was but a quarter of an hour too late; others that he really took him, and made him pay a high price for his liberty. Be patient. The Pandour Trenck perhaps will not long enjoy his riches and glory. It is said that a criminal trial awaits him, and the most terrible accusations have been brought against him, and that the empress has a great dread of him. They say those of the Croats who have not taken their own discharge, are about to be incorporated in the imperial army and governed in the Prussian fashion. As for him, I have no great idea of the recompenses and rewards which await him at court."

"They have, it is said, saved the imperial crown."

"That is true. From the frontiers of Turkey to that of France they have spread terror, and captured the best defended places, and have conquered in the most desperate battles. Always the first to attack the front of an army, the head of a bridge, or the breach of a fort, they have won the admiration of our greatest generals and have forced our enemies to flight. The French everywhere gave way before them, and Frederick the Great grew pale, they say, like a common man, at their war-cry. No river was too rapid, no forest too dense, no marsh too deep, no rock too rugged, no torrents, or falls, or fire, could be found which they did not dare at all hours of the night, and at all seasons. Yes certainly they have saved the crown of

Maria Theresa, far more than the old military tactics of all our generals and the ruse of our diplomats."

"If that be so, their crimes will be unpunished and their theses sanctified."

"It may be they will be too severely punished."

"One never casts aside persons who have performed such services."

"Excuse me," said the canon maliciously. "When they are no longer needed."

"But was not every excess which they committed in the empire and the territories of the allies overlooked?"

"Certainly. When they were necessary, they were forgiven."

"And now?"

"When outrage is not necessary, they reproach themselves with having permitted it."

"And the great heart of Maria Theresa?"

"They have profaned the churches."

"I see. Trenck is lost, canon."

"Hush! That should not be said except in a whisper."

"Have you seen the Pandours?" said Joseph, coming into the room quite pale.

"Yes, with little pleasure."

"Well, did you not recognise them?"

"It is the first time I ever saw them. How should I know them?"

"No, it is not the first time, Consuelo. We saw them in the *Böhmischer-wald*."

"Not to my knowledge."

"You have then forgot a hut where we passed a night, and where we saw ten or twelve men sleeping around us."

Consuelo remembered the hut, and having met these savage-looking persons, whom she, as well as Joseph, took for smugglers. Other emotions in which she had not participated, engraved on Joseph's memory all the circumstances of this stormy night. "Well," said he, "those smugglers who were not aware of our presence by their side, and who left in the morning with sacks and heavy bags, were Pandours. They had the arms, figures, moustaches, and cloaks which have just passed; and Providence, when he knew it not, protected us from the worst enemies we could possibly meet during all our travels."

"Certainly," said the canon, to whom Joseph had often detailed all the incidents of their journey. "These honest fellows had given themselves a leave of absence, as they are wont to do when their pockets are full; and they come to the frontier to return home by a long circuit, rather than travel through the empire with their booty, for they run some risk of being called on to account for it. Be assured, however, they did not reach home without difficulty, for on the road they kill and rob each other, so that none but the strongest of the party ever reaches their forests and caves. He brings with him the booty of his comrades."

The hour of performance came, and made Consuelo forget the sombre thoughts which Trenck's Pandours had evoked. She had no dressing-room, hitherto Madame Tesi having lent hers. On this occasion, though, la Tesi, offended at her success, had carried away the key, and the prima donna of the night was annoyed to find a place of refuge. These and similar treacheries are usual in theatres, for they irritate and disturb the rival, the temper of whom is sought to be of-

fended. She loses time in finding a dressing-room, and is afraid she will find none. The hour advances, and as her companions pass her, they say, "What, not dressed yet! The curtain will soon rise." At last, after many efforts by means of threats and menaces, a room is found, without, however, anything that is required. All the sewing-women's good-will having been gained by some malicious enemy—the costume either does not fit or is unfinished. The dressing-women wait on any one but the victim of this petty malice. The bell rings. The call-boy (the *butta fuori*) shouts down the corridors, (*Signore e Signori, si va cominciar,*) terrible words which frighten the debutante into a chill. She is not ready and hurries. She hurries, and breaks her corset-strings, she tears her cuffs, puts on her mantle awry, and her crown will fall as soon as she gains the stage. Trembling, angry, and nervous, with tears in her eyes, she must yet wear a celestial smile. She must have a pure and fresh voice, and restrain herself when she is almost choking with anger. Even coronets of flowers thrown at such a time on the stage conceal a thorn.

Fortunately for Consuelo, she met Corilla, who said, taking her hand, "Come into my dressing-room; la Tesi has flattered herself that she would serve you as she did me at the commencement of my engagement. I will, however, come to your aid, if it be only to foil her and make her angry. I will have that satisfaction at least. As you now go on, Porporina, there is danger of my seeing you far surpass me, as every time that I have met you has been the case. You will certainly forget how I act now to you, but will always remember what wrong I have done you."

"Wrong done me, Corilla?" said Consuelo, as she entered her rival's dressing-room and began her toilet behind the screen, while the German dressing-women divided their attentions between the two singers, who were able to speak Venetian without being understood. "Really, I do not know what wrong you have done me. I have forgotten all."

"The proof that you have not forgiven me is, that you speak to me as if you were a duchess, and seem to despise me?"

"Well, I do not remember any great wrong you have done me," said Consuelo, restraining her repugnance to familiarity with a woman who had so little in common with her.

"Is what you say true? Have you forgotten poor Zoto?"

"I was free and had a right to forget him. I have done so," said Consuelo, fastening her royal buskin, with a courage and freedom of will which confers on us at times the advantages of perfect use. She made then a brilliant *routade* to keep herself in voice.

Corilla replied by another *routade* for the same purpose. She then paused to say to her attendant, "Diavolo, you lace me too tight. Think you I am a Nuremburg doll? These Germans," said she in Venetian, "do not know what shoulders are. They would make us square as their own old women, if we would let them. Porporina, do not let them bundle you up to your ears as they did last time. It was absurd."

"Ah! my dear, that is the empress's order.—These ladies know it, and I would not make a difficulty about such a trifle."

"Trifle! one's shoulders a trifle?"

"I do not say so of yours, for they are beautiful as possible; but—"

"Hypocrite!" said Corilla, sighing; "you are ten years younger than I am, and the beauty of my shoulders is now traditional."

"You are the hypocrite," said Consuelo, terribly annoyed by this kind of conversation—and as she wished to end it, she began at once to sing.

"Be silent," said Corilla at once; "you drive a thousand poniards into my bosom. Ah! I would willingly yield you all my lovers—I am sure to find others. I can never, however, dispute with you in the matter of voice and manner. Hush! for I wish to strangle you."

Consuelo saw clearly that Corilla did not jest altogether, and that this mocking flattery concealed real suffering. After pausing an instant, the latter said, "How do you make that phrase?"

"Do you wish to make it? Well, I will give it to you," said Consuelo, with admirable grace. "Listen, I will teach you. Insert it to-night somewhere on your *role*—I will make another."

"Then it will be handsomer than this, and I will gain nothing!"

"No; I will make no change. Porpora does not like these things, and to-night he will have one reproach less to make me. See, here is the passage," and she passed it through the screen to Corilla, who began at once to study it. Consuelo assisted her, and after repeating it several times, succeeded perfectly. Their toilets were yet progressing.

Before Consuelo had put on her dress, Corilla suddenly pushed aside the screen, and kissed her thankfully for the sacrifice she had made of the embellishment. It was not an impulse of pure gratitude that induced her to do so. She was also influenced by a wish to ascertain the fashion of her rival's corset, in order to detect any imperfection. Consuelo, however, did not lace; her waist was loose as possible, and her chaste and noble form was indebted to art for nothing. She saw la Corilla's idea, and smiling, thought—"You may examine my person and look into my heart, no falsehood is there."

"Zingarella," said Corilla, resuming, in spite of herself, her bitter, coarse tone; "do you then love Anzoletto no more?"

"Not in the least," said she with a smile.

"Yet he loved you well."

"No, no," said Consuelo, with the same air and the same expression of conviction.

"He told me so," said Corilla, fixing her clear blue eyes on her, expecting to find some sorrow and to awake some regret for the past, in her rival's heart.

Consuelo was not proud of her penetration, but, like all pure and sincere persons, she was amply able to combat an astute one. She no longer loved Anzoletto; she was not ignorant of suffering, of outraged self-esteem, and therefore allowed Corilla this triumph of vanity.

"He told you an untruth; he never loved me."

"But did you never love him?" said she, rather surprised than astonished at this confession.

Consuelo knew that she could not make a half-confession. Corilla wished to know all, and she resolved to satisfy her. She said: "I loved him dearly."

"And you own it? Have you no pride, child?"

"I had enough to overcome it."

"That is to say, you were philosopher enough to seek consolation from another? From that little Haydn; perhaps, who is as poor as possible?"

"That would be nothing. I have consoled myself with no one in the manner you mean."

"Ah! true; I forgot, you pretended. Do not say such things, my dear; you make yourself ridiculous."

"Then I will not, unless I am questioned; and I will not permit every one to do so. I have suffered you, dear Corilla, to take that liberty, but you must not abuse it, if you are my friend."

"You are a perfect mask," said Corilla. "You act the innocent. You have so much good sense, that I am inclined to think you pure, as I was when twelve years of age. Yet this is impossible. Ah, Zingarella, you are very shrewd, and can make men believe anything you please."

"I will make them believe nothing, for I will not permit them to be interested in my affairs enough to question me."

"That will be best. They always make a bad use of our confessions, and no sooner wrest them from us than they take advantage of them. I see you know your own business. You are right in not wishing to inspire love. By not doing so you will have no trouble, no storms. You will act freely, without deceiving any one. I could not act so; amid my greatest successes I always committed some folly, which destroyed all. I conceive a passion for some poor devil, and then farewell fortune! Once I could have married Zustiniani. Yes, I could, for he adored me, but I could not bear him. That miserable Anzoletto, though, pleased me. I lost my position. Give me some advice; you will be my friend, will you not? You will preserve me from the weakness of my heart, and the effects of my scheming brain. To begin—I must tell you that for eight days I have had an inclination for a man the influence of whom rapidly decays, and who, in a short time, may be rather injurious than beneficial to one at court. He is worth millions, but may be ruined in an instant. I wish to separate myself from him before he drags me down in his own ruin. Ah! the devil plots against me, for here the man comes, and I feel the fire of jealousy rushing to my face. Shut the screen closely, Porporina, and do not move; I do not wish him to see you."

Consuelo closed the screen. She needed not Corilla's advice to avoid being examined by her lovers. A man's voice, musical and clear, though without freshness, was heard at the door. He tapped for form's sake, and came in without pausing for a reply.

"Horrible profession!" thought Consuelo. "No, I will not suffer myself to be influenced by the intoxication of the stage. Behind the scenes all things are impure."

She sat in a corner, deeply mortified at being in such company, and indignant and afraid at the manner in which Corilla had conversed with her. She had plunged at once into an abyss of corruption, of which she previously had no idea.

CHAPTER XCV.

WHILE, from fear of interruption, she hastily concluded her toilet, she heard the following dialogue in Italian:

"Why do you come here? I told you not to come to my dressing-room. The empress has, under the most severe penalty, forbidden us to receive any one but our brother artists here; and we can only see them when the business of the theatre requires it. See what you expose me to. I did not think things were so badly managed."

"When people pay well they go anywhere. Beggars are the only people who find any difficulty in going where they please. Come now, be more civil, or I will never see you again."

"Would to heaven that you never would! Go! Why do you not?"

"You seem to be so anxious, that I remain out of spite."

"I tell you unless you go I will send for the master of the theatre, and thus get rid of you."

"He can come as soon as he is tired of life."

"Are you mad? I tell you that you compromise me by this conduct, and make me violate a rule recently imposed by her majesty. You expose me either to a heavy fine or to discharge."

"Fine? I will pay your fine with my cane. As for a discharge, it is exactly what I want. I will take you to my estate, and there we will lead a delicious life."

"Follow such a brute as you? Never! Let us go out together, then, since you will not leave me alone."

"Alone, my charmer? I wish to be sure of that before I go. That screen is utterly out of place in such a small room. It seems to me if I pushed it over I would do you a service."

"Do not so, sir. A lady is dressing there. Brigand as you are would you kill or injure a woman?"

"A woman? Ah! that is a different matter. I wish, however, to see if that woman does not wear a sword."

The screen began to tremble, and Consuelo, who had finished her toilet, put on her mantle, and while the first fold of the screen was closing, tried to open the last, and escape through the door, which was only a few feet distant. Corilla, however, saw her intention, and said—"Be still, Porporina; if he did not find you he would be satisfied some man was hidden there, and would kill me." Consuelo resolved to come out, but la Corilla had closed the screen, and prevented her from doing so. Perhaps she hoped that by exciting his jealousy she would enkindle passion enough to keep him from observing the grace of her rival.

"If there be a lady there, let her answer me. Madam, are you dressed? Can I do homage to charms?"

"Sir," said Consuelo, in obedience to an intimation from Corilla, "keep your compliments for some one else, and excuse me. I am not visible."

"That means, this is precisely the time to look at you," said Corilla's lover, attempting to go behind the screen.

"Take care," said Corilla, with a forced laugh. "What if in place of a naked shepherdess you see a dowager?"

"*Diable!* But no; her voice is too fresh to belong to a person more than twenty years old. Besides, if she had not been pretty, you would have suffered me to see her long ago."

The screen was very high, and, in spite of his tallness, the lover could not see above it unless he threw down all the articles of Corilla's toilet, which hung on the chairs. Now, too, that he was not afraid that her inmate was a man, the game amused him.

"Madam," said he, "if you be old and ugly, I will respect your asylum. If though, you be young and handsome, do not let Corilla slander you, and only give me leave to pass the lines." Consuelo was silent. "Ah! on my word," said he, after a moment's silence, "I will not be duped. If you were old and ugly you would not bear to hear

yourself called so with such perfect coolness. It is because you are an angel that you laugh at my doubts. At all events, then, I must see you, for you are a prodigy of beauty, capable even of inspiring Corilla with fears in relation to herself, or you are a person with mind enough to own that you are ugly. If that be so I shall be glad for once in my life to see an ugly woman without vanity."

He took hold of Corilla's arm with only two fingers, and bent it as if it had been a wisp of straw. She cried out that he had hurt her severely, and, opening the screen, exposed to Consuelo the horrible face of Baron Francis von Trenck. A rich court dress replaced his savage costume, but his giant form, and the large purple spots on his sun-turned face, made it easy to recognise at once the pitiless and bold leader of the Pandours.

Consuelo could not repress a cry of terror, and pale with fear, sank back on her chair. "Do not be afraid of me, madam," said the baron, kneeling, "and forgive the temerity, which, when I see you, it is impossible for me to regret. Let me think that it was from pity, (knowing that I cannot see without adoring you,) that you refused to see me. Do not distress me by letting me think I have frightened you, ugly as I am. If war has turned a handsome enough young man into a kind of monster, be sure it has not injured me in any other respect."

"To injure you were impossible," said Consuelo, turning her back on him.

"See there," said the baron; "you are stern indeed, and your nurse must have told you some vampire stories about me, as the old women of this country ever do. The fair, though, do me justice, being well aware that if I am rude in my treatment of the enemies of my country, I am able to civilize myself if they give me an opportunity." Leaning toward the mirror in which Consuelo pretended to examine herself, he cast on it the savage, and at the same time voluptuous look, the brutal fascination of which had overpowered Corilla. Consuelo saw that the only way to shake him off was to offend him.

"Baron," said she, "you do not inspire me with fear, but with disgust and aversion. You love to kill, and I am not afraid to die. I hate all sanguinary natures, and such I know yours to be; I have travelled *after you* in Bohemia."

The baron changed countenance, turned towards Corilla, and said:

"What a she-devil this is! The Baron Lestocq, who fired a pistol at me, was not more perfectly out of humor. Have I ever trampled down her lover? Come, my pretty one, be at ease, for I did but jest. If you are ill-tempered I deserve your reproof for having suffered myself to stray, though but for a moment, from my divine Corilla."

"Your divine Corilla," said she, "cares very little about your vagaries. I beg you to leave—for in a moment the manager will make his tour—unless you are determined to get us into difficulty."

"I am going," said the baron; "I do not wish to trouble you, and deprive the public of the freshness of your voice by making you weep. My carriage will wait for you after the play. This is understood." He snatched a kiss from her in the presence of Consuelo, and left.

Corilla at once threw her arms around Consuelo's neck, and thanked her for having thus rid her of Von Trenck. Consuelo looked away for Corilla, sullied with the kiss of such a man, was an object of almost as much disgust as he was.

"How can you be jealous of so disgusting a being?" asked Consuelo.

"Zingarella," said she, with a smile, "you do not now know your own heart. The baron pleases more exalted women, and many who call themselves more virtuous than me. His form is superb, and his face, though covered with scars, has an attraction you could not resist if he took it into his head to pay court to you."

"Ah, Corilla, it is not his face that disgusts me, his mind is yet more hideous. You do not know that he has a perfect tiger's heart."

"That is what led me astray," said Corilla. "To hear the common stories of all the fools who hover around us is a glorious thing, forsooth! To bind a tiger, though—to subdue a forest lion—to lead him in a leash—to make one sigh, weep, blush, and tremble at a single glance, whose look has routed armies—and with one blow of his sabre cut off an ox's head—is a more intense pleasure than I have ever known. Anzoleto was something of that kind; I loved him for his depravity; the baron, however, is much worse. The one was capable of beating his mistress, the baron might kill her. Oh! I love him much more!"

"Poor Corilla!" said Consuelo, looking at her with a glance of deep pity.

"You pity me, because I love him. You are right. You have more reason, though, to envy me. I had rather, after all, that you pitied than that you should contend with me for him."

"Do not be afraid," said Consuelo.

"*Signora si va cominciar!*" said the call-boy.

"*Cominciate!*" sang out a stentorian voice from the floor occupied by the dressing-rooms of the chorus.

"*Cominciate!*" said another melancholy and deep voice below the stairway, and beneath the stage. The last syllables were echoed behind the scene, until they reached the prompter, who communicated them to the leader of the orchestra by three taps on the floor. The latter tapped on his music-stand, and after the moment of palpitation which precedes the commencement of the overture, the symphony began, and silence pervaded the house, both before and behind the curtain.

From the commencement of the first act of Zenobia, Consuelo produced the complete and resistless effect which Haydn had predicted. Great talent does not always produce an infallible effect on the stage, even supposing that their power never declines; all parts and all circumstances are not calculated for the development of the most brilliant faculties. This was the first time that Consuelo had a role—a part in which she could exhibit herself in her candor, power, tenderness, and purity, without regard to art and without any effort to identify herself with an unknown person. She could forget this terrible labor, abandon herself to the emotion of the moment, and inspire at once pathetic and profound feelings, which she had not had time to study, and which were revealed by the magnetism of a sympathetic audience. She now experienced an indescribable pleasure, and deaf to the clamor of the crowd, in her own heart, applauded herself.

After the first act she remained at the fly, to hear the interlude, and to encourage her by applause. After the second act she felt that repose was necessary, and went to the dressing-room. Porpora, who was otherwise engaged, did not go with her, and Haydn, who, by the secret influence of the imperial patronage, had been received as one of the violins of the orchestra, remained at his post.

Consuelo went to Corilla's dressing-room, the latter having given

her the key, alone. She took a glass of water, and for a moment lay on the sofa. Suddenly she remembered the Pandour, and arose and locked the door. There was, however, no probability that he would come to annoy her. He had, on the rising of the curtain, gone to the front of the house, and Consuelo had seen him in one of the balconies amid her most fantastic admirers. He was passionately fond of music, having been born and educated in Italy, the language of which country he spoke perfectly. Had he been born without any other resources, he could have made his fortune at the theatre, his biographers maintain.

Consuelo, however, was perfectly amazed when, on returning to the sofa, she saw the screen move, and the Pandour come from behind it.

She rushed to the door, but Trenck was too quick, and placing his back against the lock, said:—

“Be calm, my charmer.” As he spoke, he put on a terrible smile. “Since you share this dressing-room with Corilla, you must grow used to meeting her lover here; for you cannot be ignorant that he too has a key to it. You have thrown yourself into the lion’s den. Do not call, for no one will hear you. All know the presence of mind of Trenck, and also his total disregard of life, the strength of his wrist, and his utter contempt of fools. If, in violation of the imperial order, he is permitted to come here, it is because among all these ballad-singers there is not one dares look him in the face. Why need you grow pale and tremble? Have you so little confidence in me that you will not hear me speak three words? Do you think me a man apt to violate and outrage you? These are the gossipings of old women. Trenck is not so bad as they say; and to prove this, he wishes to speak with you for a few moments.”

“Monsieur, I will not hear one word until you have opened that door,” said Consuelo, regaining her presence of mind. “If you will do that, I will listen to you; but if you persist in confining me here, I am satisfied that, brave as you are, you dare not confront my companions, the ballad-singers.”

“You are right,” said Trenck, throwing the door open. “As you are not afraid of offending me, I too prefer fresh air to being stifled by the musk with which Corilla has filled all this room. You have done me a service.”

While he spoke, he took possession of Consuelo’s hands, forced her to sit down, and placed his hands on her knees without releasing her own. She could not resist without bringing on a mere puerile dispute, which perhaps would provoke him to resistance, and destroy all scruple and respect. Consuelo saw this, and resigned herself. She could not resist letting fall one pale sad tear. The baron saw this, and instead of being moved or disarmed, suffered a wild and cruel joy to play on his blood-stained lips, which, by the explosion, had been completely excoriated.

“You are very unjust to me,” said he in a voice, the coarseness and wildness of which betrayed a most hypocritical satisfaction. “You hate me without knowing me, and are unwilling to hear my justification. I cannot, however, submit so foolishly to your aversion. One hour ago I cared nothing about it; but since I have heard the divine Porporina, I love her, and feel I must either live for her or die by her hand.”

“Do not inflict this stupid comedy on me,” said Consuelo, perfectly enraged.

"Comedy?" said the baron, "Look you here." As he spoke, he took a loaded pistol from his pocket and cocked it. "Take this pistol in one of your beautiful hands, and if I have in any respect offended you—if I am yet odious—kill me. This other hand I am resolved to hold as long as you will permit me to kiss it. I will give this favor to yourself, and you will see me wait patiently for it under the muzzle of this murderous weapon, which you can turn on me whenever you cannot resist my annoyance."

Trenck really gave Consuelo the weapon, and retained her left hand by force while he remained on his knees with the confidence of the rarest fatuity. Consuelo then felt herself very strong, and placing the pistol so that she could use it at any moment of danger, said with a smile:

"You may speak; I listen to you."

As she spoke, she fancied that she heard steps in the corridor, and soon the shadow of some one crossing the door. The shadow, however, disappeared at once, either because the person returned, or that Consuelo's terror was imaginary. Situated as she was, and apprehending nothing but scandal, the approach of any one, whether negative or inclined to aid her, made her rather afraid than otherwise. If she kept silence, the baron, found on his knees, with the door open, might pretend to have been favored by her; if she called for aid, the baron would certainly kill the first man who entered. There were fifty similar instances in his private career; and the victims of his passions had always been more or less disgraced. In this terrible alternative, Consuelo could devise nothing more than a prompt explanation; and hoped that her own presence of mind would restore Trenck's reason, without having any witness to comment on or arbitrarily interpret this whimsical adventure. He understood her partially, and half-closed the door.

"Really, madam," said he, returning to her, "it would be mad to expose yourself to the notice of passers-by, for this difficulty we must settle between ourselves. Hear me: I see your fears, and know all the scruples of your friendship for Corilla. Your honor, your reputation, your truth, are yet dearer to me than these precious moments during which I am enabled to see you alone. I know well enough that the panther, of whom I was enamored half an hour ago, would accuse you of treachery if she found me at your feet. She shall not. I have regulated all that; and she must by her tricks amuse the public for yet ten minutes more. I have, therefore, time enough to say, that if I have loved her, I have forgotten her completely as I have the first apple I ever ate; do not therefore fear to take from her a heart she has lost already, but which henceforth nothing can efface your image. You alone, madam, rule, and may control my life. Why hesitate? You have, they say, a lover. I will get rid of him in a moment. You are watched by a malicious and ill-tempered guardian. I will carry you away in spite of his teeth. You have a thousand plots against you in the theatre. It is true the public love you, but the public is ungrateful, and will desert you as soon as you begin to fail."

"I am immensely rich, and can make a princess of you—almost a queen—in a savage land, but where, by a glance, I can build palaces and theatres vaster than those of Vienna. If you ask for an audience, by one flash of my sword I can cause to spring from the ground a populace as devoted, and far more faithful than that of Vienna. I

know I am no beauty; but the scars on my face are more respectable and honorable than the paint on the cheeks of your buffoons. I am stern to my serfs, and never forgive my enemies, but to faithful servants I am kind. Those I love swim in joy, glory and opulence. Sometimes I am violent, as you have heard, for one cannot be brave and strong as I am, without being anxious to make use of power when vengeance or pride demand it. A pure and timid woman, though, gentle and charming as you are, may subdue my power, and keep me like a child at her feet. Try to do so. Be mine secretly for a time, and you will see that you can confide your future fate to me, and accompany me to Slavonia.

"You smile. My country reminds you of slavery, but, divine Porporina, I will be the slave. Look at me, and grow used to this want of beauty, which your love would cause to disappear. Speak but the word, and you will see that Trenck, the Austrian, from his red eyes can shed tears of love and joy as well as his dear Prussian cousin whom he loves, though they have fought in opposite ranks, and to whom, as people say, you were not indifferent. The Prussian, however, is a child, while I, though yet young, (I am but thirty-five, wrinkled as my face is,) seem twice as old as he is. I have passed the age of caprice, and can promise you long years of happiness. Speak, speak to me, and you will see that passion can transform Trenck, the Pandour, into a Jupiter. You do not answer; a touching modesty makes you hesitate. You say nothing. Suffer me to kiss your hand and withdraw, full of hope and happiness. See if I am a brute and a tiger, as I have been described. I ask but an innocent favor, and I implore it on my knees."

Consuelo looked at the Pandour, the seducer of so many women, with complete surprise. She carefully studied the secret of that fascination which, in spite of his deformity, would have been so irresistible, had he been a good and sincere man, and if his passion had not been the Quixotism of impertinent presumption.

"Have you done, baron?" she said, calmly; but suddenly she grew pale, as she saw a handful of diamonds, pearls, and huge rubies, which the tyrant had thrown in her lap. She rose abruptly, and suffered all these gems to fall on the floor. Corilla would pick them up.

"Trenck," said she, with the deepest disgust and indignation, "in spite of your vaunted courage, you are a vile coward. You have only fought with flocks and herds, and then you slew without pity. From a true man you would have fled like a wolf, as you are. All these glorious scars, I am well aware, were received in a cave where you fought for gold amid the carcasses of your victims. Your castle and your little kingdom are formed from the blood of a noble people, on whom despotism inflicts such a compatriot as you are for a ruler. You have robbed the orphan of bread, the widow of her mite—your gold is the price of treachery—your riches the pillage of churches. Your Prussian cousin, whom you love so tenderly, you have betrayed and wished to murder; the women, the glory of whom you say you have made, you have violated, after murdering their lovers and husbands. The tenderness for me, of which you boast so much, is the whim of a worn-out libertine. This chivalric submission which induced you to place your life in my hands, is but a trifling favor. To slay you would be a disgrace, from which I could only purify myself by suicide. This is all I have to say, Pandour. Quit my sight, for if you do not let go my hand, which you have held, and which for the

last half hour has grown like ice in your own, I will blow out your brains and purify the earth from your presence."

"Is that all you have to say, she devil? Well, the pistol I have placed in your hand is unfortunately loaded with powder. One scar more or less would do no harm to one fire-proof, as I am. Fire the pistol—make a noise—that is all I want. I shall be satisfied with having witnesses of my victory. Nothing now can shield you from my embraces, and by your folly you have aroused a fire which, by a little prudence, you might have restrained."

While speaking thus, Trenck seized Consuelo in his arms; just then, however, the door opened, and a man, the face of whom was completely covered by a crape mask, placed his hand on the Pandour and made him tremble and quail like a reed in the wind, and furiously cast him on the ground. All this took place in the course of a second. Trenck, completely astounded, rose up with haggard eyes and a foaming mouth. He drew his sword and rushed on his enemy, who went to the door and seemed to fly. Consuelo also hurried to the door, fancying that in this man she recognized the form and bearing of Albert. She saw him go to the end of the passage, where a winding staircase descended rapidly to the street. There he paused—waited for Trenck—stooped quickly, suffering the baron's sword to strike the wall. He then took him in his arms and threw him over his shoulders, head foremost, down the stairway. Consuelo heard the giant fall down the steps. She wished to hurry after the unknown, and call him Albert. He had disappeared, however, before she had strength enough to make three steps. There was a terrible silence on the whole staircase.

"*Signora, cinque minuti,*" said the call-boy kindly, as he came from the theatre up the stairway, which ended at the same place. He then said—"How came this door open?" as he saw the door through which Trenck had been thrown. "Indeed your ladyship has run a great risk of taking cold." He shut the door and locked it, in obedience to orders; while Consuelo, more dead than alive, returned to her dressing-room, and threw out of the window the pistol which had remained on the sofa, kicked under the furniture the gems and rubies which yet glistened on the carpet, and went to the theatre, where she found Corilla yet blushing and panting at her triumph, in the interlude.

CHAPTER XCVI

IN spite of the agitation which had convulsed Consuelo, she surpassed herself even in the third act. She had not expected this, nor did she rely on it. She went on the stage with the resolution of failing with honor, when suddenly she recovered her powers. She was not afraid. A thousand hisses would have been nothing compared with the danger and terror from which she had escaped, by a kind of miraculous intervention. Another miracle ensued; the good genius of Consuelo seemed to watch over her. She had more voice than she ever had, and sung with more mastery, playing at the same time with more energy and passion than she had as yet done. All her being seemed to be exalted to the highest pitch, and it seemed every instant

that, like too tense a chord, she was about to snap. A feverish excitement, however, transported her to a higher sphere, and she acted as if she were in a dream, amazed at her own capacity.

Whenever she feared a failure, a thought of happiness revived her. Albert was there, beyond doubt. He had been in Vienna since the day before; beyond any doubt. He observed and watched her motions. He watched over her. To whom else could she attribute the unforeseen aid she had just received, and the almost supernatural power which was required to strike down the Pandour, Trenck, the Slavonian Hercules? What if from one of the whims of which his character offered but too many examples, he refused to speak to her, —if he seemed to wish to avoid her, it was not on account, evidently, that he did not love her ardently. Did he not watch and protect her anxiously, and defend her boldly?

"Well!" said Consuelo, "since God permits my power not to desert me, I wish Albert to see me succeed in my *role*, and that from some corner of the theatre, where, doubtless, he witnesses a triumph for which I am indebted neither to a cabal nor to Charlatanism."

Though she maintained the character of her *role*, she looked around for him. It was in vain, however, and when she went behind the scenes, she yet again searched, but to no purpose. "Where could he be? Where did he hide himself? Had he killed the Pandour when he threw him over the stair-way? Was he forced to conceal himself to avoid pursuit? Why not ask Porpora to protect him? Would she see him when she returned to the embassy? All these annoyances disappeared when she went on the stage. She forgot then, as if by some magic influence, every circumstance of real life, and experienced only a vague anxiety of mingled enthusiasm, terror, gratitude and hope. All this was in her part, and was exhibited in admirable accents of tenderness and truth.

She was called out after the opera, and the empress threw a bouquet—to which was attached a present of considerable value—to her. The court and the people followed her example, and there was a perfect shower of flowers. Amid all these perfumed offerings Consuelo saw fall at her feet, was a green branch, to which her eyes became involuntarily fastened. As soon as the curtain had fallen, she picked it up. It was a cypress branch. She forgot all the offerings made to her success, to contemplate and comment on this funereal emblem of grief and dismay, perhaps the token of an adieu. A violent chill succeeded the fever of emotion, and a cloud passed before her eyes. Her strength gave way, and almost fainting, she was taken to the house of the Venetian ambassador. She yet had under her cloak the cypress bough, which had exerted so terrible an influence over her.

As she went down the staircase she saw no stain of blood. In the confusion of the departure no one else had. While, however, she was going home, absorbed in her own meditations, a sad scene was passing with closed doors, in the green-room. Just before the end of the spectacle, the scene-shifters had found Baron Trenck at the foot of the staircase perfectly insensible, and covered with blood. He had been taken to one of the rooms, and to avoid confusion, the manager and the physician of the theatre, and also the police had been sent for. The public and the company then left the building, without being aware of what had happened. While the professional people, the imperial officers, and some kindly-disposed persons waited to succor the Pandour, Corilla, who was waiting her lover's carriage

and who had several times sent her maid to enquire—went down alone, notwithstanding the risk of being forced to return home on foot. She met Holzbauer, who was aware of what was going on between Trenck and herself, and who took her to the green-room, where she found him with his head crushed and his body so contused, that he could not move. Her sighs were loud and long; and Holzbauer, after dismissing all useless persons, shut the doors. The singer could say or think of nothing which would throw any light on the affair. At last Trenck having somewhat revived, said that he had come into the theatre without leave, to see the dancing girls, and that being anxious to leave, he had proceeded quickly down the passage. Not being familiar, however, with the house, he had stumbled at the top of the narrow stair-way and rolled to the bottom. All were satisfied with this explanation, and he was taken home, where Corilla nursed him so zealously that she lost Prince Kaunitz' favor, and consequently her majesty's good will. She, however, made the sacrifice; and Trenck, the iron frame of whom had resisted ruder shocks by far, after the expiration of a week was able to come out, with only one more scar on his head. He told no one of his mischance, only resolving to make Consuelo atone dearly for it. This he doubtless would have done, had not an order for his arrest torn him from Corilla's arms and hurried him to a military prison, before he had entirely recovered from a fever which ensued from the effects of his accident.

What rumor had vaguely informed the canon of began to be realized. The Pandour's wealth had awakened intense hostility against him in the midst of many influential men. He was a memorable victim. Accused of all the crimes he had committed, and of others attributed to him by interested persons, he had to writhe under the delays, the vexations, the impudent prevarications and injustices of a long and scandalous trial. We will leave him until a new order, in prison, where, having committed some infraction of the police, he was chained by the foot—disgracefully, too, for the government—by that very foot, broken by a bomb in one of his most famous exploits. After undergoing a most terrible operation, before his health was fully re-established, he had mounted his horse to resume his command. Around this scar an iron fetter was placed. The great queen, (who had not been offended when he oppressed and lacerated Bohemia, a rampart by no means strong enough to protect her from the enemy, on account of old national enmity,) Maria Theresa, no longer needing the crimes of Trenck and his Pandours to protect her throne, now fancied them unpardonable, and was thought to be ignorant of this cruel treatment—precisely as Frederick was supposed to be ignorant of the atrocity and torture, borne in a dungeon, loaded with chains weighing sixty-eight pounds, by another Baron Trenck, who had been his own page and aide, and who was the savior of Consuelo. The flatterers have slightly mentioned these atrocities, or attributed them to obscure subaltern officers, as a means of purifying the memory of their masters. These sovereigns, however, were not ignorant as they would be thought; but, on the contrary, knew all that passed. Frederick, himself, furnished the design of Trenck's chains, which that gallant man wore in Magdeburg for nine years; and if Maria Theresa did not precisely order the Austrian to be chained by his wounded foot, she refused to listen to his complaints, and was insensible to all he said. Besides, from the scandalous orgies her agents

carried on with the wealth of the fallen Pandour, she contrived to save a portion, which she refused to restore to his heirs.

Let us return to Consuelo; for it is the duty of a writer of romance to pass rapidly as possible over historical details. When she learned what had befallen the Pandour, she forgot the outrages with which he had menaced her; and, deeply touched by his misfortune, aided Corilla in sending him money at a time when the means of softening his captivity were refused him. Corilla, ever more anxious to spend than earn money, was without funds when an emissary of her lover came to ask for what he needed. Consuelo was the only person to whom she dared apply; and the latter at once sold the present which the empress had made her at the conclusion of Zenobia, giving the proceeds to her companion, whose conduct in not deserting Trenck now that he was unfortunate, she fully approved of. Corilla's zeal and courage in assisting her lover, inspired Consuelo to regard with a kind of esteem this corrupted creature, who was not, however, absolutely perverse, yet retaining many kind emotions, and much disinterested feeling. Joseph and herself had much conversation about this, and Consuelo justified herself for her sympathy to her own satisfaction.

Thus, fifteen days passed after the performance of Zenobia, and the adventure of Baron Trenck. The six representations for which she had been engaged were passed, and Madame Tesi had returned to the theatre. The empress, through the ambassador, Korner, exerted a great influence over Porpora, and made Consuelo's marriage with Haydn the condition of a permanent engagement in the Imperial Theatre, after the expiration of that of la Tesi. Joseph was ignorant of all this, and Consuelo had no suspicion of it. She thought of nothing except the absence of Albert, and the fact that she had received no news of him. A thousand suspicions and contradictory ideas passed through her mind, from the effects of which she became much excited. She had not left her room since the cessation of her engagement; and looked constantly at the cypress-branch, which seemed to have been taken from some tomb in the grotto of Schreckenstein.

Beppo, the only friend to whom she could speak openly, sought at first to persuade her that Albert had not come to Vienna. When, however, she showed him the cypress-bough, he thought over all this mystery, and concluded that the young count had something to do with Trenck's mischance.

"I think," said he, "that I see how all has happened. Albert came to Vienna, saw, and heard you; he has observed all you did, and watched your every step. On the day we were talking on the stage, in front of the curtain, representing the Araxes, he was behind, and heard my regret at seeing you borne from the theatre at the very advent of your glory. You uttered some exclamation to the same purpose, which made him fancy that you preferred the *eclat* of your career to the solemn sadness of his love. On the next day, he saw you enter Corilla's room; and perhaps, for he was on the look-out, saw the Pandour go thither previously. His delay in aiding you, proves that he thought you had gone thither willingly, and, after he had fallen a victim to the temptations of eaves-dropping, he came so opportunely to your aid."

"Well," said Consuelo; "but why act so mysteriously?—why wear the mask?"

"You know what the Austrian police is. Perhaps he has enemies

at court, or had political reasons for concealment. It may be his face was not unknown to Trenck—who knows, if during the recent war he may not have seen him in Bohemia, and offended him, or protected some one whom he wished to injure? Count Albert may have performed bold and courageous deeds, while all fancied he slumbered at Schreckenstein: at all events, he is not the man to talk of himself, being the most modest and innocent of men. He was then prudent in not chastising the Pandour with his face bare: if the empress to-day punishes Trenck for having devastated Bohemia, be sure she will not forgive any Bohemian, who, in other days, resisted the Pandour."

"All you say is very true, Joseph, and makes me think; now a thousand anxieties fill my mind, Albert may have been recognised and arrested, without the public being any more acquainted with the fact than with Trenck's fall down the stairway. Alas! he may now be imprisoned in the arsenal, side by side with Trenck. This misfortune he undergoes for me."

"Be calm—I do not think this is the case. Albert left Vienna at once, and you will soon receive a letter from him at Riesenberg."

"Have you a presentiment to that effect?"

"Yes, I have. If, however, you wish to know all, I think this letter will be different from what you wish. I am satisfied, that far from persisting in asking from a generous friendship the sacrifice of your artistic career, he has abandoned all idea of marriage, and will restore you your liberty. If he is intelligent, noble, and just, as you say he is, he will have great scruples in taking you from the theatre, to which you are passionately devoted. Do not deny the fact. I saw it; and, after hearing *Zenobia*, he too must. He will then regret so great a sacrifice: if he did not, I would not respect him."

"But read his last note. Here it is. Did he not say he would love me on the stage as well as in any other position? Could he not marry me, and yet leave me free?"

"To say and to do,—to think and to be,—are totally different: when, though reality is before us, we return to our old ideas. I can never think that a nobleman can see his wife exposed to the whims and caprices of a partner. When, certainly for the first time in his life, the count went behind the scenes, he saw in Trenck's conduct a sad exemplification of the perils of theatrical life. He withdrew in despair, perhaps, but perfectly cured of his passion and fancies. Excuse me speaking thus to you, Consuelo, but Count Albert's desertion to you is a real benefit. You will one day see it yourself, though now your eyes are filled with tears. Be just then to him, and do not be humiliated at this change. When he said he had no objection to the theatre, he talked of an ideal, which crumbled at the touch of truth. He saw, that in taking you from the stage, he would make you unhappy, or that if he accompanied you, he would be so himself."

"You are right, Joseph; I see you are. The humiliation of being deserted and neglected does not trouble me: I regret the ideal of love I had formed, as Albert, perhaps, had of the stage. He has now, perhaps, seen that I could not keep myself worthy of him, (at least in man's opinion,) in such a profession. I, too, am forced to own, that my love is not great enough to overcome every obstacle and prejudice."

"Be just, Consuelo, and do not ask more than you can yield. You did not love deeply enough to renounce art without hesitation, and do not complain that Count Albert could break with the world with horror and prostration."

"Great, though, as was my secret agony, (I will now own it,) I was ready to sacrifice every thing to him."

"Remember he was passionate—not you. You consented with difficulty. He saw well that you were about to immolate yourself, and saw that he had a right not only to free you from a love you had not courted, the necessity for which your soul did not recognise, but that his conscience required him to do so."

This conclusion satisfied Consuelo of Albert's prudence and generosity. She was afraid if she abandoned herself to grief, she yielded to the suggestions of wounded pride; and, following Joseph's suggestions, calmed herself. With a whimsicality, however, not unfrequent in the human heart, she no sooner saw herself free to follow her theatrical taste, without aught to distract her, than she became aware of her isolation in that corrupt society, and became terrified at the difficulties which appeared before her. The stage is a brilliant arena; and, when once on it, we become exalted, and all the ordinary emotions of life seem dull and tame compared with it. But, when one leaves it, exhausted and weary, it is with shuddering fear at the ordeal undergone, and a return to it is contradicted by fear. I imagine the acrobat is the type of this painful, arduous, and terrible life. He must experience a nervous pleasure on the cords and ladders, on which he performs feats beyond human power; but, when he has once left the rope, he must tremble at the very idea of ascending it again, and braving death and triumph, the two faces of the spectre ever before him.

Then the Giants' Castle, hitherto an object of terror, and a perpetual nightmare, seemed to Consuelo, through the veil of her exile, a paradise lost, a sojourn of peace and candor, ever holy and venerable. She bound the cypress-bough, the last relique of the Hussite cavern, to the foot of her mother's crucifix, and uniting these two emblems of catholicism and heresy, exalted her heart to the idea of the sole eternal and absolute religion. There she poured all the sentiment of resignation to personal ills, and faith in the providential designs of God and Albert, seeing that henceforth she must journey through life alone, and without a guide

CHAPTER XCVII.

ONE morning, Porpora sent for her earlier than usual, and she found the maestro perfectly happy, with a letter in one hand and his spectacles in the other. Consuelo trembled in every limb, imagining that at last an answer was come from Riesenbergh. She was, however, soon undeceived, the letter being from Hubert, the Porporino. This famous singer told the maestro that the engagement of Consuelo was determined on, and he sent a contract signed by Baron Poëlnitz, director of the Theatre-Royal of Berlin, which needed only the signature of Porpora and of Consuelo. The baron had also written a very flattering letter which invited Porpora to contend for the musical control of the Royal Chapel, and to produce as many operas and *fugues* as he wished, by means of which he might prove his capacity. Porporino was delighted at the idea of being able to sing so soon after

his own heart, with a musical sister, and besought the maestro at once to leave Vienna, for *Sans Souci*, the delicious home of Frederic the Great.

This letter delighted Porpora, yet it filled him with uncertainty. It seemed to him that Fortune was about to smooth her angry brow, and that from two quarters royal favor (then so necessary to *artists*,) offered him brilliant prospects. Frederic invited him to Berlin: at Vienna, Maria Theresa made brilliant promises. Consuelo, in both instances was the instrument of his success; for at Berlin she best could exhibit his compositions—at Vienna she could provide for him by marrying Joseph Haydn.

The time had then come, when his fate was in the hands of his adopted daughter. He asked her to marry or go with him, as she chose; and, under the circumstances, was far less urgent that she should marry Joseph Haydn than he otherwise would have done. He was a little weary of Vienna, and the idea of being feted and caressed by the empress's enemy, seemed a little revenge—the effect of which at the Austrian court he probably exaggerated. At all events, as Consuelo spoke no more of Albert, he preferred the idea of her not marrying at all.

Consuelo soon put an end to all his doubts, by saying that, for many reasons, she would not marry Joseph Haydn at all. The first was, that he had never courted her, and was engaged to the daughter of his benefactor, Anna Keller.

"Then," said Porpora, "there is no choice. Here is a contract for your engagement at Berlin: sign, and let us prepare to go, for there is no hope for you here, unless you submit to the empress's *matrimonio-mania*. That is the price of her protection, and a positive refusal will make us seem to her worse than devils."

"My dear maestro," said Consuelo, with more firmness than she had ever yet exhibited to Porpora, "I am ready to obey you as soon as I am satisfied about one important matter. There exist certain relations of esteem and respect between the Count of Rodolstadt and myself; I will not deny it, in spite of all your sneers and laughter. I have since we separated kept myself free from every engagement incompatible with this marriage. After a letter, however, which I wrote him, six weeks ago, things have happened which induce me to think the Rudolstadt family have given me up. Every day that passes induces me to think this is the case, that I have been released and am free to consecrate all my care and toil to you; and I accept such a career without any hesitation. Yet, after the letter I have written, I cannot be at ease until I receive an answer. I expect it every day, and it must come soon. Postpone the signing of the contract until after——"

"My poor child," said Porpora, who as soon as she began to speak, prepared to discharge the guns he had long kept loaded; "the answer you look for was sent to me a month ago."

"And you did not show it to me? You left me in this terrible uncertainty? Maestro, you are a strange man. What confidence can I have in you, if you treat me thus—if you deceive me?"

"How did I? The letter was written to me, and I was enjoined not to show it to you until I saw you had recovered from your mad passion, and disposed to be reasonable and prudent."

"Did he write thus?" said Consuelo, blushing. "It is impossible that either Count Christian or Count Albert have thus spoken of so pure and calm an affection as mine."

"Words mean nothing," said Porpora. "Men of the world always use big words, and we must understand them. As the old count was not anxious to have a daughter on the stage, as soon as he knew you were here, he made his son abandon all idea of the marriage. Albert found good reason for doing what he has done, I assure you. I see with pleasure that you are not angry. That is all as it should be and we will be off for Prussia."

"Maestro, show me the letter, and I will sign the contract at once."

"Why ask to see the letter? There are certain follies we must forgive in others, and in ourselves forget."

"We cannot forget what we choose. Reflection aids and causes help us not to do so. If I have been repelled from Rudolstadt with disdain, I will soon be consoled. If I am restored to liberty, with esteem and affection, I will be consoled with less difficulty. Show me the letter. What are you afraid of; for, one way or the other, I shall certainly obey."

"Well, I will," said the ill-tempered maestro, opening his secretary and pretending to look for the letter. He searched every drawer, moved all his papers, and the letter (which had never existed) could not be found. He pretended to grow impatient, while Consuelo really was so. She set about looking for it; overturned his drawers and papers. No letter. Porpora sought to remember it, and to improvise a polite and civil epistle. Consuelo could not suspect Porpora of so wholesale a misrepresentation.

For the honor of the maestro, we must imagine that he got out of the affair very badly, and Consuelo fancied that in a moment of abstraction he had lighted his pipe with the letter; and after having retired to her room to pray, and to swear on the cypress bough eternal friendship to Albert, she returned tranquilly to sign an engagement to begin at the termination of the present one. This time was more than necessary for the completion of the preparations for her departure and journey. When Porpora saw the contract complete, he kissed Consuelo, and saluted her formally by her title of *artiste*.

"This," said he, "is your day of confirmation, and were it in my power to force you to make a vow, I would insist on your renunciation of love and marriage. You are now a priestess of the goddess Harmonia; the muses are virgins, and she who consecrates herself to Apollo should take the vestal vow."

"I will not promise not to marry," said Consuelo, "though just now it seems to me it would be easy to do so. I may, however, change my mind, and might repent of a promise I could not break."

"You are then a slave of your word. Yes, it seems to me in that respect you differ from all the human race. If you made a solemn promise, you would keep it."

"Master, I think I have proved this. All my life I have been under the influence of some vow. My mother set me an example of this kind of religion, which she pushed almost to absurdity. When we travelled together, and drew near a large city, she would say, 'Consuelo, if I do well here, I call you to witness that I go barefooted and pray for two hours in the holiest chapel of the country.' When, poor soul, she fared well—that is to say, when she earned a few crowns by her songs—she always kept her vow, without regard to weather or distance. This was not a very enlightened or sublime devotion; but I look on these vows as holy. When on her death-bed my mother made me swear never to be Anzoletto's, except in legit

mate marriage, she knew that she could confide in my oath, and died in peace. Subsequently, I promised Albert to think of no one else, and to do all I cou'd to love him. I did not violate my promise, and had he not released me, I could have been faithful all my life."

"Have done with your Count Albert, for you should not think of him. If you must be under the influence of some vow, tell me how you will engage yourself to me?"

"Maestro, confide in my reason, in my devotion to you. Ask me for no oath, for you would thus lay a terrible burden on me. The fear of violating it destroys all pleasure in acting and in thinking rightly."

"I do not like that," said Porpora, half in earnest. "I see you have made vows to every one but me. Let us talk, however, of the one you made to your mother. It was of infinite service to you, my poor child, and without it you would perhaps have been enamored of that infamous Anzoleto. But, subsequently, without love, and from pure goodness of heart, you made important promises to Rudolstadt, who was almost a stranger, and I shall think it very hard, if, on a day like this, made famous by your restoration to liberty and art, you will make no vow to your own professor—to your best friend."

"Yes; my best friend, and benefactor, my aid and my father," said Consuelo, casting herself into Porpora's arms, who was so sparing of his kind words that twice or thrice only had he permitted his heart to exhibit any paternal love; "I can unhesitatingly vow to devote myself to your glory and fame, so long as my life lasts."

"My happiness," said Porpora, clasping her to his heart, "is in my fame. I know no other. I am not one of those German dolts who dream of no other happiness than to have a daughter to feel their pulses or warm their gruel. I want neither: If I did, I would not consent for you to sacrifice your time to me. You sacrifice too much already. This is not what I need. I require you to be only an artist—a great artist. Will you be—will you combat this languor, this irresolution, this feeling of disgust you had at first? Will you reject the compliments of the fine gentlemen who run after actresses, some because they think them good housewives, and abandon them as soon as they find out the contrary; and others, because, having lost their fortunes, they find it very comfortable to keep a coach and table at the expense of their better halves; and, on that account, willing to forget the estimation in which the public holds marriages of this kind. Will you promise to suffer no little tenor, with a smooth voice and graceful curls, to turn your head, as that Anzoleto did, who has no grace except in his legs, and no success but from his impudence?"

"I promise and swear to all this," said Consuelo, laughing at the simplicity of Porpora's strong exhortation. "I will do more—I will swear that you shall never have to complain that I have been ungrateful, as long as I may live."

"Ah, that is more than I dare to ask. It is too much for human nature to promise. When you are a great singer, and known over all Europe, you will be vain and ambitious, for such every great artist must be. You will insist at all risks on success. You will not strive patiently for it, or endanger it by fidelity to friendship or the worship of the beautiful. You will act like others, and sing popular music without regard to the bad taste of the people and court. You will succeed and be great in spite of all that, without which you cannot please the masses. If you will think carefully, when you sing before

a few old fellows like myself,—the great Handel or old Bach—you will be a credit to Porpora and yourself. I ask and hope nothing more. You see your father is not an egotist, as some of your flatterers say I am. I ask of you nothing that does not advance your fame and glory."

"I am careless," said Consuelo, "of what merely redounds to my own glory. I can suffer myself to be carried away by the involuntary intoxication of success; but I cannot think coldly of a whole life of triumph, and then crown myself. I wish glory for you, maestro. Notwithstanding your incredulity, I wish you to see Consuelo lives for you alone; and to satisfy you that you have calumniated me, I make a promise to you beforehand."

"And on what do you make that vow?" said Porpora, with an expression of mingled confidence and distrust.

They were interrupted by Count Hoditz, whom a grand heyduc announced. The servant asked permission for his master to pay his respects to Porpora and his pupil, and looked at the latter with an expression which surprised her, who remembered that she had somewhere seen his strange though handsome face. The Count was admitted, and made known his wishes in the most courteous terms. He was about to go to his estate at Roswald, in Moravia, and, wishing to make it pleasant to the margravine, his wife, intended to surprise her by a magnificent festival. He wished Consuelo to sing three evenings at Roswald, and requested Porpora to superintend the spectacles, concerts, and serenades.

Porpora told him of his engagements at Berlin, the contract for which Hoditz wished to see. This enabled the nobleman to give some good advice, and led to his urging Porpora in yet stronger terms to accept the offer. "You can," said he, "make your preparations in three days, and go to Berlin through Moravia. It is not exactly the road; but, instead of your journeying slowly through Bohemia, scarcely yet recovered from the devastation of war, you can travel more quickly to Roswald in a carriage. I will place at your disposal—"

[This meant that they should travel at the Count's expense.]

He then promised to send them to Pardubitz, in case they wished to go down the Elbe to Dresden, or to Chrudim, if they wished to go by Prague. The facilities he offered really would shorten the journey most of the way, and the round sum he offered enabled them to make the rest of it more comfortable. Porpora accepted the offer, in spite of the look of Consuelo to dissuade him. The bargain was made, and the last day of the week appointed for setting out.

When he had kissed her hand respectfully, Hoditz left Consuelo with her maestro, who reproached him with having been so easily won.—Though she had no longer to bear the count's impertinences, she was yet a little angry with him, and did not, willingly, go to his house. She did not wish to tell Porpora what had happened at Passau, but reminded him of what he had said about the musical inventions of Count Hoditz.

"Do you not see," said she, "that I shall have to sing his music, and you will be forced seriously to conduct operas and cantatas in his style. Is this the way you wish me to keep my vow, to remain faithful to the worship of the beautiful?"

"Enough!" said Porpora, with a smile; "I will not be so stern as you think I am. I expect, however, to amuse myself without my lord

having any suspicion of the matter. To do such things seriously, before a respectable public, would be blasphemy and disgraceful. One may amuse one's self, however; and an artist while earning his bread would be very unfortunate, if he could not laugh at those who enable him to obtain it. You will also see the Princess of Culmbach, who is a very charming personage—she will laugh with us, though she rarely ventures to laugh at her father in his music."

She had to yield—make up her bundles, and bid all good-bye. Joseph was in despair. Just then, however, a great piece of good fortune happened to him, which, if it did not atone, averted his attention from the pain of the separation. While playing his serenade beneath the window of Bernardoni, the clown, the famous harlequin of the theatre of the Corinthian gate—that amiable artist had been stricken with the power of his music. Bernardoni sent for him, made him come up stairs, and asked who was the composer of this sympathetic and original music. He was amazed at his power and talent, and gave him, before they parted, the words of a ballet called *Le Diable Boiteux*, the music of which he had begun to write. He was in the midst of the tempest, which gave him such trouble that when he was eighty years of age Haydn continued to laugh at it. Consuelo sought to amuse him, by speaking of the tempest which Bernardoni wished to be terrible, and which Beppo, who never had seen the sea, could not describe. Consuelo described the Adriatic to him, and sought to make him understand the motion of the waves—not, however, without laughing with him at the effect of her imitative harmony, aided by blue cloths, shaken up and down by men standing at the flies.

"Listen to me," said Porpora; "you may try for a hundred years with the sublimest instruments and the most perfect knowledge of the motion of the winds and waves, before you can at all represent the harmony of nature. This is not a fit object for music, which goes astray when it seeks for power and sonorousness. It has a wider field. All emotion is its domain. Its object is inspiration, and its origin also is inspired. Imagine, then, the impressions of a man abandoned to this torment—a danger awful, terrible, and imminent. Let a musician place himself—that is, let a human vibrating, living soul be fixed amid this distress and disorder—this desertion and despair—give vent to his sorrow, and the audience, whether it respond to it or not, will participate in this. It will fancy that it hears the sea, the crushing of ships, the cry of the sailors, and the despair of the passengers! What would you say of a poet who, in describing a battle said, that the canon said *boom, boom*, and the drums *plan, plan*? Yet this would be an exact harmonic imitation. It would not, however, be poetry. Painting, the descriptive art *par excellence*, is not a mere servile imitation. In vain would the artist paint the sea green, the stormy sky black, and the ship wrecked. If he be unable to describe terror and the *tout ensemble*, his picture will be colorless, though brilliant as the sign of a beer-cellar. Fill yourself, young man, therefore, with the idea of a great disaster; in that way you will excite others."

Thus paternally he spoke, while the carriage was being harnessed in the yard, and the trunks were being fastened on. Joseph listened to his instructions with attention, drinking them—so to say—at the very fountain head. When, however, Consuelo, in her cloak and fur-red bonnet, came to him and clasped his neck, he grew pale, stifled a cry, and unable to see her get into the carriage, went into Keller's

back shop to hide his tears. Metastasio conceived an affection for him, and taught him Italian perfectly, thus consoling him by good advice and generous services for Porpora's absence. Joseph, however, was long sad and unhappy, before he became used to Consuelo's absence.

Consuelo, too was sad, and was sorry to lose so kind and estimable a friend. She felt, nevertheless, her courage revive, and became again awake to all the poetry of her impressions, as she went among the mountains of Moravia. A new sun arose to her. Separated from every tie and every influence opposed to art, she seemed to belong entirely to it.

Porpora, restored to hope and to the enjoyment of youth, frequently gave vent to the most noble declamations; and the true-hearted girl, though she continued to love Albert and Joseph as two brothers she would meet in heaven, felt happy as a sky lark, whose notes grow more brilliant as it approaches heaven.

CHAPTER XCVIII.

AT the second relay, Consuelo recognised in the servant who accompanied her, and who sat on the seat of the coach, paid the guides and reproved the postillions when they went too slowly, the same heyduc who had announced Count Hoditz, on the day he came to propose the pleasure party to Roswald. He was a tall, stalwart fellow, who seemed ever and anon to look at her, and seemed divided between a desire and fear to speak to her. One morning when she breakfasted in an isolated inn at the foot of a mountain—Porpora having gone out to walk in search of some musical idea—she turned to the valet, and looked at him for a moment in a stern and irritated manner. He then, however, looked so pitifully at her, that she could not refrain from laughing. The April sun shone on the snow which yet crowned the mountains, and Consuelo was in an excellent humor.

"Alas!" said the mysterious heyduc; "your ladyship at last recognises me. I have never forgotten you, even if you had been disguised as a Turk, or a Prussian corporal. Yet I never saw you but for a moment. What a moment, though, that was!"

As he spoke, he placed on the table the plate he brought, and making the sign of the cross, knelt.

"Ah!" said Consuelo, "Karl, the deserter?"

"Yes, signora," said the heyduc, kissing her hand; "so they tell me I must call you; though for my part I am not sure whether you are a gentleman or a lady."

"Indeed? and why do you doubt?"

"I have seen you dressed as a boy, and though I knew you, there was as much likeness to you in woman's dress as when I first saw you. All this, however, means nothing. Be what you please, you have done me services which I shall never forget; and were you to order me to throw myself from the summit of the peak above us, I would not refuse to obey."

"I ask nothing from you, my good Karl, except to be happy and enjoy your liberty. Now you are free, and I think you enjoy life."

"Free! yes;" said Karl, shaking his head, "but happy—alas! I have lost my wife."

Consuelo's eyes were filled with tears, for she sympathized with Karl, as she saw his cheeks completely distorted by sorrow.

"Ah!" said he, slaking his moustache, over which the tears dropped like dew from a bush; "she had suffered too much. Her distress when she saw me a second time carried away by the Prussians—a long journey when she was in bad health, and her joy at seeing me again—all caused such a transition, that she died eight days after I came to Vienna, and where, thanks to a billet from you, she found me again. Count Hoditz was of no use, however, for she was now utterly exhausted, and found repose only in the bosom of her God."

"And your daughter?" said Consuelo, who sought to make him happy.

"My daughter," said he, half amazed, "the King of Prussia killed her too."

"How? what?"

"Did not King Frederick kill the mother by producing all this sorrow? Well, the child followed the mother. Since that time, having seen me wounded and carried away by the recruiting sergeants, both lay asleep, and almost dead in the road, the young one yet troubled with fever, and fatigue and weariness famished them. When you met them on the bridge at the suburbs of I know not what Austrian city, she had eaten nothing for two days. You gave them money, and told them that I had been saved. You did all you could to console and care for them. They told me all about it. From the time we met until they were buried, they grew every day worse. Scarcely had my wife died when I had to open her grave to bury my daughter. Now, thanks to the King of Prussia, Karl is alone in the world."

"No, Karl, you are not alone; you have many friends who yet have an interest in you and your misfortunes."

"Yes, I know all that. There are many kind persons, like yourself. But of what use are they to me, now that my wife and child are gone? I have now neither home nor country, my mountain being too well known to the brigands, who have come twice to look for me. As soon as I was alone, I asked if we were at war, or if we would be soon; for I had but one idea, that of serving against Prussia, and of killing as many Prussians as I could. Ah, Saint Wincelas, the patron saint of Bohemia, would have guided my arm; and I am sure no shot I fired would have been lost. I heard, though, that there would be a long peace; and then I had no care for anything. I went to thank Count Hoditz for his kindness, and asked him to present me to the empress, as he had intended. I wished to kill myself; he, however, was kind to me, and the Princess of Culmbach, his daughter-in-law, to whom he had told all my story, spoke kindly to me about my duties as a Christian, and I consented to live and enter their service, where, to tell the truth, I am too well fed and nourished for what I have done."

"Now, tell me, Karl, how you came to know me?"

"Did you not sing one night at the house of my new mistress, the margravine? I saw you pass, all dressed in white, and knew you at once in spite of your female dress. You see I do not know or remember many of the places through which I have gone, nor the persons I have met, but I never forget faces. I began to make the sign of the cross when I saw a young man with you, Joseph Haydn. So far from being your master, as he seemed to be at the time of my deliverance (for then he was better dressed than you,) he had become

your servant, and remained in the antechamber. He did not know me; and though the count had forbidden me to say one word about what had happened, (I never asked why,) I did not say a word to Joseph, though I felt as if I could have hugged him. He went almost immediately into the other room. I had orders not to leave the one in which I was, and a good servant knows nothing but his orders. When every one, though, had gone, the valet de chambre of monseigneur, who is in his confidence, said: 'Karl, you did not speak to that servant of Porpora, though you recognised him. The count will be glad of it. As for the young lady who sang to-night'—Ah! I knew her too, and said nothing.—'Well,' said he, 'you were right there, too. The count wishes no one to know anything about his trip to Passau.'

'That is nothing to me,' said I; 'but may I ask how it was that she rescued me from the Prussians? Henri told me how all passed, (for he was there,) and how, when you had no reason to be alarmed for yourself, you insisted on his coming to my aid. You said something to my poor wife, and she told me all about it. For when she died, she prayed that God might have mercy on you. When I saw Joseph in your service, having been charged to take him money from monseigneur, at the house of whom he had played a few days before on the violin, I put in the paper several ducats, the first I had gained in my present service. He did not know it, and did not know me. If we ever return to Vienna, I will contrive that he shall never be in trouble as long as I have money.'

'Joseph is no longer in my service, Karl. He is no longer in difficulty. He is a musician, and can easily support himself. Do not rob yourself to aid him.'

'As for yourself, signora, I can do little for you, who are, they tell me, a great actress; but should you ever need a good servant, without being able to pay for one, send for Karl: He will serve you for nothing, and will be glad to work for you.'

'Such gratitude amply rewards me, Karl. I ask nothing from your good heart.'

'Here comes Maestro Porpora. Remember, signora, I only know you as a servant sent by my master to attend on you.'

The next day the two travellers, who had risen early, reached the castle of Roswald. It was in a lofty region, and the highest portion of Moravia, and was so well sheltered from the winds that the spring had already begun to exert its influence. Though the weather was unusually mild, the roads were not good. To Count Hoditz, however, nothing was impossible, and he was already on the spot with a hundred pioneers, who were at work on the road over which, on the next day, the majestic equipage of his noble spouse was to roll. It would, perhaps, have been more conjugal for him to travel with her; but he was not so anxious to keep her from breaking her neck as to give her a great reception. Dead or alive, she must be nobly received on her arrival at Roswald.

The count scarcely permitted the travellers to change their toilet, when he had an excellent dinner served to them in a rocky and mossy cavern, which a stove, screened by thin stones, heated most agreeably. The view from the door of the cavern was most magnificent, and at the first glance delighted Consuelo. Nature had done everything for Roswald. Stern landscapes, green trees, bounding streams, admirable prospects, and verdant plains, all seemed to unite to make it a pleasant home. Consuelo, however, soon saw traces of the count's

attempts to destroy the sublimity of this nature. The grotto would have been charming, but for a glass door which converted it into a very uncomfortable dining-room; and as the trefoil and clover were only beginning to spring up, the windows had been decked with artificial flowers. Shells and stalactites were seen to be fastened to the walls by plaster, and the heat of the stove caused the dampness of the grotto to fall on the heads of the inmates in a heavy dew which the count would not notice. Porpora got out of humor, and twice or thrice put his hand on his hat, without daring to put it on his head as he wished. He was afraid that Consuelo would take a cold, and ate rapidly, pretending to be very anxious to see the music he was to play on the next day.

While this was being urged by Porpora, a servant entered, and told Count Hoditz that two foreign officers returning home asked permission to pay their compliments to him, and to see the grounds and palace of Roswald.

The count was used to visits of this kind, and especially delighted in playing the *cicerone* himself. He, therefore, welcomed them by message, and ordered covers to be placed for them.

A few moments after the officers were introduced. They wore the Prussian uniform. The one who walked first, behind whom his companion seemed to be completely hidden, was small and common looking. His nose was long, coarse and expressive of no nobility, and made more conspicuous the total absence of a chin. His shoulders, which were very crooked, gave an oldish air to his form, which was wrapped in the ungraceful coat Frederick had invented. This man was about forty years of age, and his step was firm and distinct. As soon as he had taken off the villainous cap which came down to the bridge of his nose it became apparent that there was something good about his head, which was firm, intelligent and thoughtful. His brow was quick to move, and his eyes very expressive. His glance changed the whole man, as the sun's rays beautify and embellish the saddest and most poetical localities. He seemed to grow a head taller whenever his eyes began to shine.

"Count Hoditz received them with a hospitality which was rather cordial than ceremonious, and without losing time, had their plates filled with the choicest delicacies, and exhibited a truly patriarchal kindness. Hoditz was a very kind man, and vanity, far from corrupting his heart made him more generous. The people of his domains were yet serfs, and all the splendors of Roswald had been constructed at little expense by the people liable to labor. He bound flowers around the yokes his peasants bore. He made them forget what was necessary, by exhibiting all the superfluities of life, and being satisfied that happiness and pleasure are identical, amused them so that they did not dream of freedom.

The Prussian (there was but one, the other seeming to be a mere shadow,) seemed somewhat surprised, and perhaps rather shocked at the count's frankness. He affected to be somewhat reserved when Hoditz said—"Captain, I beg you will make yourself at home. I know you are used to the sternness of Frederick's armies, which, in its place, I think is very admirable. Here, however, you are in the country, where, if we do not amuse ourselves, what can we do? I see that you are persons well-educated and well-bred, and never become Prussian officers without having shown both military knowledge and bravery. I look on you, then, as persons, the presence of

whom honors my house. Use it, then, as your own, and remain here as long as you please."

The officer at once acted like a man of sense, and after having thanked his host, began to pour out the champagne, which, however, did not excite him in the least. He also dug into an excellent *pâté*, about which he made certain gastronomical remarks and observations, which did not give the temperate Consuelo a very high idea of him. She was struck, though, with the fire of his eye, which astonished without charming her. She saw in it something haughty, suspicious, and distrustful.

While he was at the table, the officer told the count that he was the Baron von Kreutz, a native of Siberia, and had been sent to remount the cavalry at Neisse. He had not been able to resist the desire to see the palace and gardens of Roswald, and consequently had crossed the frontier with his lieutenant, and had taken occasion to purchase several horses on the way. He proposed to visit the stables of the count if he had any animals to sell. He traveled on horseback, and would return on that very night.

"I will not consent to that," said Hoditz. "Just now I have no horses for sale, not having enough for the new embellishments I propose to make. I wish, though, to enjoy your society for as long a time as possible."

"They told us when we came hither that you expected every day the countess. We are unwilling to annoy you, and will go as soon as possible."

"I expect the margravine to-morrow," said the count. "She will come with her daughter, the Princess of Culmbach. You are not ignorant, gentlemen, that I have been fortunate enough to make an illustrious alliance."

"With the Dowager Margravine of Bareith," said Baron von Kreutz, who did not seem as much overpowered by her dignity as the count expected.

"She is the aunt of the King of Prussia," said he, with emphasis.

"Yes, I know she is," said the Prussian, taking a large pinch of snuff.

"As she is a very graceful and affable lady," said the count; "I doubt not but that she will be glad to see officers of her illustrious nephew."

"We will be very grateful for such an honor," said the baron, with a smile; "but we will not be able to enjoy it. Our duties require our return at once, and we will take leave of your excellency this very night. In the interim we will be glad to look at your beautiful residence. Our master has none that can compare with it."

This compliment made the Moravian noble very gracious to the Prussian. They left the table. Porpora, who cared less about the palace than his rehearsal, did not wish to walk with them.

"No," said the count, "we will have both together, "you shall see, maestro."

He gave his arm to Consuelo, and passing first, said, "Excuse me, gentlemen, if I take possession of the only lady. It is my right as host. Be kind enough to follow me."

"May I venture," said the Baron von Kreutz to Porpora, "to ask the name of that very amiable lady?"

"Monsieur," said Porpora, who was in a bad humor, "I am an Italian; I speak German very badly, and French worse yet."

The baron who, like other people of his rank, hitherto had been speaking French, repeated his question in Italian.

"That amiable lady, who has not spoken one word in your presence is neither margravine, dowager, princess, nor baroness. She is an Italian singer of some talent."

"I am anxious to know her name," said the baron, smiling at Porpora's rudeness."

"She is my pupil, la Porporina," said Porpora.

"She is a very skilful artist," said the baron, "and is anxiously waited for at Berlin. As she is your pupil, I have the honor of speaking to the illustrious Porpora."

"At your service," said Porpora, quickly replacing his hat which he had removed at the Baron von Kreutz's low bow. The latter seeing how little he was disposed to be communicative, let him go ahead, and rejoined his lieutenant. Porpora, who had eyes in the back of his head, saw that they laughed and talked about him in their own language. He was in an especial bad humor, and did not open his lips during the rest of the promenade.

CHAPTER XCIX.

THE count took Consuelo down a declivity at the foot of which was a miniature river, which once had been a merry purling stream; as if it was necessary to make it navigable, it had been deepened, and on it floated a gondola ship perfectly rigged, and exactly like those of Venice. On it they embarked, singing a stanza of Tasso; after wandering about for half an hour, the river ran into a basin, intended to represent the sea, where was also a magnificent miniature ship, rigged perfectly, with all the paraphernalia. After having embarked in this, the count made Consuelo personate the margravine, and put all hands through a rehearsal of entertainments, with which on the next day he proposed to amuse the illustrious margravine. Miniature China, Peloponnesus and other lands had all been prepared, and to them they were made to sail amid all the discomfort of a cold wind, after which they were forced to walk over half the estate. The whole of the arrangements were fantastically ridiculous in the extreme.

Proof against fatigue, the two Prussian officers, though they laughed at the puerile amusements of the surprises of Roswald, were not so much astonished as Consuelo was at the ridicule of this wonderful residence. She was a child of nature, born in the open fields, and used, from the time she first opened her eyes, to look at God without any gauze-curtain or lorgnette. The Baron von Kreutz, though not exactly a new-comer into this aristocratic circle, used to fashionable drapery and frippery, was a man of the world, according to the fashion of his time. He had no hatred of grottoes, hermitages and symbols. In fact, he amused himself good-naturedly, and said to his Acolyte, who, as they entered the dining-room, compassionated him for having been so annoyed:

"Annoyed! not at all. I have had exercise, and have gained an appetite. I have witnessed a thousand follies, and my mind has rested from serious thoughts. I have not lost my time and trouble."

In the dining-room all were surprised to find only a circle of chairs around an empty place. The count having asked his guests to sit down, bade his valets to serve up dinner.

"Alas, monseigneur," said one, the duty of whom it was to reply, "we had nothing fit for such distinguished company, and we have not even set the table."

"That is a pretty business!" said Amphitryon, pretending to be in a rage. After the lapse of a few moments he said—"Well, since man refuses us supper, I call on the lower regions, and order Pluto to send me one worthy of my guests." As he spoke, he struck on the floor three times, and the floor at once opening, perfumed flames arose. Then there was heard the sound of music, and a magnificently served table rose up before the guests.

"That is not well," said the count, lifting up the cloth, and speaking beneath the table. "I am much surprised, though, that Pluto is so well aware that there is no water in my house. He has not sent me a drop."

"Count Hoditz," said a hoarse voice, worthy of Tartarus, "in our world water is scarce, the rivers having dried up, the light of the margravine's voice having reached the very bowels of the earth. Yet if you insist on it, we will send one of the Daniades to see if any can be found in the Styx."

"Let her be quick, and go with a bucket without a hole in the bottom."

Just then there sprang from a jasper vase, in the middle of the table, a jet of rock-water, which fell back on itself during the whole meal, in a shower of diamonds, which glittered in the light of countless lamps. The whole feast was a perfect display of wealth and bad taste; and the water of the Styx, the infernal cookery, afforded the count material for a thousand jests and witticisms, which, in spite of their childishness, were listened to. The repast was served by sylfens and nymphs, more or less beautiful, and enlightened the baron not a little. He paid but mediocre attention to the beautiful slaves of Hoditz. These poor peasant women were at once servants, mistresses, and actresses to their seignor. He was their professor of the graces, of dancing, and of declamations. At Passau, Consuelo had seen how he proceeded with them, and she wondered at the proud offer he had made her, and the respectful *sang froid* with which he now treated her, without seeming either confused or surprised. She knew on the next day, when the margravine came, things would change, that she would dine in her own room, with the maestro, and not have the honor of being admitted to the table of her highness; this did not annoy her, though just then she was ignorant of a circumstance which would for the moment have amused her greatly; the fact was, she was now supping with an illustrious person, who would on no account sup on the next day with the margravine.

The baron, smiling coldly at the appearance of the nymphs, paid more attention to Porporina, when, having induced her to break the silence, he began to talk of music. He was an enlightened and almost passionate admirer of the divine art, of which he spoke in such a manner as to do what good cheer could not—soothe Porpora's ill-humor.

"I hope," said he to the baron, who had delicately praised his manner without mentioning his name, "that the sovereign of the court to which we go is as good a judge as you are."

"They say my sovereign is well informed on this matter and that he really loves the fine arts."

"Are you sure of it, baron?" said the maestro, who could not talk without contradicting some one. "I hardly flatter myself with the hope. Kings are, according to their subjects, always masters of every art; but it generally happens that the latter are much better educated."

"In war, as in science and engineering, the King of Prussia knows more than any of us," said the lieutenant, zealously. "As for music, it is certain——"

"That you and I know nothing about it," said Captain Von Kreutz. "Signor Porpora can arrogate to himself the decision of that question."

"Royal dignity," said Porpora, "has no influence on me in musical matters. When I had the honor to instruct the Electoral Princess of Saxony, I corrected her false notes as I would those of any one else."

"What!" said the Baron, looking ironically at his lieutenant, "do kings ever utter false notes?"

"Like other people. I must say, however, that the princess, when under my tuition, rarely did so, for she had a fine intelligence to aid her."

"Then you will excuse some false notes in our Fritz, if he were impudent enough to make any?"

"Provided he would correct them."

"But you would not find fault loudly with him?" said Count Horditz, laughing.

"Yes, I would, even if he cut my head off for it," said the maestro, the confidence of whom, under the influence of the champagne, had become rather expansive.

Consuelo had been duly informed by the old canon that Prussia was a great prefecture of police, and that the most trivial words uttered on the frontier, in the lowest tone, by means of a system of mysterious and accurate echoes, in a very short time reached Frederick's cabinet; and that it would never do to say to any Prussian soldier or officer, "How are you?" without weighing every word, and, as little children say, turning the tongue over seven times in the mouth. She was sorry, then, to see the maestro embark in this mocking humor, and sought to repair his impudence by a little flattery.

"Even if the King of Prussia be not first musician of the age, one who is familiar with so many arts may be permitted to disdain one of no practical use."

She was ignorant that Frederick was as proud of being a great flutist as of being a great captain and philosopher.

"If the king esteemed music or art worthy of study," said the baron, "he probably had devoted a considerable portion of his time to it."

"Bah!" said Porpora, who was becoming more and more excited. "time and study in matters of art are useless to those to whom God has not given the innate faculty. Music is not in the power of all; and it is easier to win battles and pension men of letters, than wrest the sacred fire from the Muses. The Baron Frederick Von Trenck told me, that when his Prussian Majesty played out of tune, the fault was always laid on the courtiers. That will not do with me, though."

"Did Von Trenck say that?" repeated the baron, whose eyes were lighted up with surprise and anger. "Well," said he, calming himself

by a violent effort, "the poor devil must now have lost all taste for jokes, being now in the citadel of Glatz for life."

"Indeed!" said Porpora. "What is his offence?"

"That is a state secret. But everything tends to show that he has betrayed the confidence of his master."

"Yes," said the lieutenant, "he has sold the plans of the Prussian fortifications to the Austrians."

"That is impossible," said Consuelo, growing pale, and who, though she thought to restrain her expressions, could not repress that exclamation.

"It is impossible, and it is false. Those who persuaded the king of that lied."

"I presume you do not mean to contradict us indirectly?" said the lieutenant, growing pale.

"One must be most awkwardly susceptible to think so," said Von Kreutz, looking imperiously at his companion. "What, however, can all that be to you? and how is the maestro, Porpora, so warm in his friendship for that young man?"

"I would be as warm," said Porpora, "in the presence of the king himself. He is mistaken; and it is wrong in him to be mistaken. Von Trenck is a noble young man, and incapable of a piece of villany like that."

"I think, maestro," said Consuelo, whom the expression of the baron's face made more and more uneasy, "when you have the honor of approaching Frederick the Great, you will speak to him of nothing but music."

"The young lady seems very prudent. She was very intimate with Von Trenck, though, at Vienna."

"I, sir!" said Consuelo, with very perfectly acted indifference; "I scarcely know him."

"But," said the baron, with a piercing eye, "were the king to ask your opinion of Trenck's treason?"

"Baron," said Consuelo, meeting his glance with modest calmness, "I would tell him I have no faith in treason by any one, being incapable of it myself."

"That is a noble sentiment," said the baron: and his brow at once brightened. "You, signora, have uttered it as if you believed it."

He spoke of other matters, and charmed all by his wit and grace. During the rest of the supper, he spoke to Consuelo with an expression of good will and confidence, which she had not seen him wear before.

CHAPTER C.

AFTER the dessert, a crooped figure came among the guests, saying, "Follow me!" Consuelo, who was again doomed to play the margravine, in the rehearsal of a new scene, rose first, and, accompanied by the other guests, went up the great staircase of the chateau, which led from a door at the bottom of the hall. The figure yet preceding them, pushed open another door at the top of the stairway, where they found themselves in a vast antique gallery, at the extremity of which there was a feeble light. From that part of the room came

slow, solemn, and mysterious music, which was imagined to come from the other world.

"*Per Bacco!*" said Porpora, enthusiastically, "the count refuses us nothing. We have heard to-day Turkish, Chinese, nautical and Lilliputian music: this, however, surpasses all, and seems really to come from below."

"And you have not yet come to the end," said the count, enchanted at this eulogium.

"One must be prepared for everything, from your excellency," said Von Kreutz, with the same irony which the professor had used "after what we have seen already, nothing can surprise us."

At the extremity of the gallery, the shadow struck on a kind of gong, and a vast curtain being withdrawn, the theatre was seen illuminated, as it would be on the morrow. I will not seek to describe it, though it would be very appropriate—

Ce n'était que festions, ce n'éclair qu' astragales.

The curtain was lifted up. The scene represented Olympus—neither more nor less. The goddesses were disputing for the heart of the shepherd Paris—and the meeting of the three principal divinities, made the chief portion of the piece. It was written in Italian, and made Porpora say, as he spoke to Consuelo—"The slave, and the Chinese were nothing; now we have the Iroquois." Verses and music were all written by the Count. The actors and actresses were worthy of their parts. After half an hour of metaphors and *conceits*, in relation to the absence of the most charming and powerful divinity, who disdained to dispute the prize of beauty—Paris, having resolved to ensure the triumph of Venus, the latter took the apple, and coming into the stage, placed it at the feet of Consuelo. This will give an idea of the character of the piece, which, however, the Count looked on as a *chef d'œuvre*, and insisted that Consuelo should personate Venus, and should read with Porpora during the evening, and the next morning. It was not long nor difficult to learn, and they were sure at the time of the performance of being quite up with the rest of the troop. The party then visited the ball room, which was not yet ready, because the dances were not to take place until the day after to-morrow, and offer an uninterrupted series of amusements.

It was ten o'clock at night. The weather was fair and the moon magnificent. The two Prussian officers insisted on crossing the barrier that very night, saying "that they were ordered never to sleep beyond the frontier." The Count then was forced to yield; and having ordered their horses to be prepared, took them to drink the stirrup-cup—that is to say, to taste coffee and sundry choice liquors—in a boudoir, whither Consuelo did not think proper to accompany them. She then bade them adieu, and after enjoining on Porpora to be more on his guard than he had been during supper, went to her room, which was in another wing of the chateau.

She soon, however, became lost in the detours of this labyrinth, and soon got into a kind of cloister, where her lamp was near going out.—Fearing to go yet farther wrong, or perhaps injure herself in some of the *surprises*, with which the house was filled, she resolved to feel her way back until she came to that part of the house which was well lighted. Amid the confusion of preparations for all the follies which were meditated, comfort had been entirely neglected. Savages, shadows, gods, hermits, nymphs, games, sports, were in abundance; but there was not a servant to hold a light, or a single person with good sense enough to answer a question.

Just then she heard the steps of a person, who seemed to walk carefully, and glide along the walls. She had not confidence enough to call to him, especially as from the step, and distinct breathing, she knew it must be a man. She advanced, with not a little excitement, holding on to the wall, when she saw a door open not far from her, and the light of the moon penetrating through the wall, fell on the tall and manly form of Karl. She hastened to speak to him.

"Is it you, signora?" said he, in an excited voice. "For a long time I have sought for an opportunity to speak to you, and now perhaps I am too late."

"What have you to say, Karl, and whence comes your emotion?"

"Leave this corridor, signora; I must speak to you in a place more completely isolated, and where, I hope, no one can hear us."

Consuelo went with Karl to a terrace, which was on one side of the flanks of the chateau.

"Signora," said the deserter, speaking with precaution, (having come that morning to Roswald for the first time, he knew nothing more of the things and people around him, than Consuelo); "have you said nothing to-day likely to expose you to the dissatisfaction or distrust of the King of Prussia, for which you might be sorry some day at Berlin, if the king should hear of it?"

"Nothing, Karl. I knew that any Prussian, with whom one is not acquainted, is a dangerous person to talk with—I, therefore, watched every word."

"And you were right. I drew near you two or three times, when we were in that log vessel. I was one of the pirates, who you will remember pretended to be about to board, but you did not know me. It was in vain that I looked at and made signs to you, but I could not speak. That officer was always at your side; and all the time you were on the lake, he did not leave you. One might have fancied he took you for a breastplate, and stood behind you, for fear some chance shot should strike him."

"What do you mean, Karl? I do not understand you. Who is that officer? I do not know him."

"I need not tell you. You will find out as soon as you go to Berlin."

"Why make a secret of it now?"

"Because it is a terrible secret, which I must keep for one hour more."

"You are very much agitated, Karl. What is it that troubles you?"

"Much. Hell is in my heart!"

"Hell! one might fancy you meditated something wrong."

"Perhaps I do."

"Then you must tell me. You have no right to conceal it from me, Karl; for you promised perfect submission and devotion."

"What, signora? True; I owe you more than life, for you did all you could to preserve my wife and daughter. They were doomed, however, and died. They must be avenged."

"Karl, in the name of your wife and child, who now pray for you in heaven, I order you to speak. You meditate, I know not what act of folly; you wish to avenge them. The sight of that Prussian renders you mad."

"It makes me furious. Now, however, I am calm as a saint. You see, signora, the hand of God, not of the devil, is on me. Farewell—the time is nearly come. It may be, that I will not see you again, and

I beg you to pay for a mass for me, at the shrine of St. John Népomuck, one of the patrons of Bohemia."

"Karl, you will tell me—you will confess to me—the ideas which torment you, and I will pray for you. If not, I will invoke the curses of your wife and daughter, who are God's angels, and rest in the bosom of His merciful son. How can you be pardoned in heaven, if you do not pardon on earth? I see that you have a carbine under your cloak, and are watching for the Prussians?"

"No, signora,—not here. I would not shed blood in my master's house, nor before you, pure and good as you are—but amid the mountain there is a dark pass which I know, having been there when they rode by. I was there, however, by chance, and without arms. I did not know him at first. He will return there, and I will meet him, well mounted as he is. You are right, signora, I have a carbine—an excellent one with a ball in it for his heart. It has long been there—for when I played the pirate I was in earnest. The opportunity was good, and I took aim at him half-a-dozen times. You were there, however, and I did not fire. Soon you will be away, and then he cannot hide behind you, like a coward, as I know he is. I saw him grow pale and turn his back, one day when he was forcing us to march against the Bohemians, our countrymen. Horrid! for I am a Bohemian in heart and in blood—that blood is unforgiving. If, however, I am a poor peasant, who learned in the forest to handle the wedge, he made a soldier of me, and, thanks to his corporal, I can fire my gun with as much accuracy as any one."

"Karl, be silent—you are mad. You do not know that man, I am sure. He is the Baron von Kreutz. You do not know him. He is no recruiter, and never injured you."

"Signora, he is not the Baron von Kreutz; no, Signora, I know him well. I have seen him on parade a hundred times. He is a great recruiter, and the chief of the men-stealers and destroyers of families. He is the scourge of Bohemia, and my enemy. He is the enemy of our church, religion, and saints, and profaned by impious ridicule the statue of St. John Népomuck on the bridge of Prague. He stole from the castle of Prague the drum covered with Ziska's skin; and as Ziska was a great warrior, all Bohemia honored that drum. No, I am not mistaken, and I know him. Besides, Saint Wenceslaw appeared to me just now as I prayed in the chapel. I saw him distinctly as I see you, and said to me; 'It is he—dig out his heart.' I swore to the Virgin, over my wife's tomb, to do so, and I will keep my oath. Oh! signora, look; there is his horse at the door; that is what I needed. I will to my post. Pray for me; for I must, sooner or later, atone for this with my life. That is of little matter if God save my soul!"

"Karl," said Consuelo, with unusual force, "I thought you were generous, sensible, and pious; yet I find that you are a coward, a reviler, and a wretch. Whoever the man you wish to murder may be, I forbid you to follow or injure him. The devil has assumed the form of a saint to betray you. You are base and ungrateful, I say; for you do not remember that Count Roditz, who has been kind to you, and has heaped benefits on your head, will be accused of your crime, and will pay for it with his head. Go, seclude yourself in some cave, Karl, and do penance for the very thought. Look there—your wife weeps beside you, and seeks to keep back your good angel who is about to save you."

"My wife! my wife," said Karl completely amazed: "I do not see her. Speak to me if you are here. Let me see you once again before I die."

"You cannot see her: your heart is wicked. Kneel, Karl, kneel. Give me that gun, and pray."

Consuelo took the carbine, which Karl did not seek to retain, and hastened to put it out of his sight, while he knelt and wept. She left the terrace to place it somewhere else, being completely exhausted by the effort she had made to acquire an influence over the fanatic by evoking chimeras. Time pressed, and this was no occasion to read a moral lecture. She said exactly what suggested itself, being, perhaps, under the influence of an inspiration which made her sympathise with the poor man, whom she wished at all events to save from an act of madness, and whom she seemed to censure severely, though she pitied the delirium he could not control.

She hurried to hide the weapon, intending to rejoin and detain him until the Prussians had gone. Just then opening the little door which led from the terrace to the corridor, she saw Baron von Kreutz face to face with her. He had gone to his room to get his pistols and cloak. Consuelo had only time to hide the carbine behind the door and go into the corridor, closing the door between Karl and herself. She was afraid the sight of the enemy would revive all his fury.

The precipitation of her motions, and her leaning against the door as if she were about to faint, did not escape the clear eye of Count von Kreutz. He had a light in his hand, and paused, with a smile, before her. His face was perfectly calm, yet Consuelo fancied that the light quivered in his hand. The lieutenant was behind him, pale as death, with a drawn sword in his hand. These circumstances, as well as the certainty she acquired at a later hour that a window of the room in which the baron had placed his luggage opened on the terrace, made Consuelo think subsequently that the two Prussians had heard every word of the conversation. The baron, however, saluted her courteously and kindly; but her alarm rendered her unable to return it. Von Kreutz looked attentively at her with an expression of more interest than surprise. He said to her kindly, taking her the while by the hand:

"Calm yourself, my child; you seem much agitated. We frightened you as we passed so rapidly before the door just as you opened it. We are, however, your servants and your friends, perhaps we may meet at Berlin, where I may be useful to you."

The baron drew Consuelo's hand towards him, as if half inclined to kiss it. He but pressed it gently, bowed again, and retired, accompanied by his subaltern, who did not even seem to see Consuelo, so much was he troubled, and so completely beside himself. The circumstance confirmed Consuelo in her idea that he was aware of the danger to which they had been exposed.

Who, thought she, was this man, the responsibility of whom weighed so heavily on the heart of another, and the destruction of whom seemed so completely intoxicating to Karl? Consuelo returned to the terrace to wrest this secret from him. She found he had fainted away; and being unable to lift him, went to call other servants to his assistance.

"This is nothing," said they; "he has drunk too much hydromel, and we will put him to bed." Consuelo wished to go with them; for she was afraid, when he recovered his senses, Karl would betray his

secret. She was prevented from doing so by Count Hoditz, who took her arm, and said he was glad she had not gone to bed, for he had intended to regale her with a new spectacle. She had to go to the front door, where she saw on one of the hills of the park, precisely over the spot Karl had pointed out, an arch of light, on which was confusedly distinguished letters in colored lamps.

"It is a very handsome illumination," said she, in a tone of deep abstraction.

"It is a piece of politeness—an adieu to the guest who has just left us. Before a quarter of an hour has sped he will pass through a hollow ravine we cannot see from this place, and will see this triumphal arch raised above him as if by magic."

"Count," said Consuelo, aroused from her reverie, "who is the person that has just left us?"

"By-and-by you will know."

"If I should not ask, I will say no more. I suspect that his name is not the Baron von Kreutz."

"I was not deceived for an instant," said Hoditz, with not a little pride. "I preserved his incognito, however, most religiously. I know people become offended when they are not treated exactly as they wish to be. You saw I treated him as a simple officer, and yet——"

The count died almost from a desire to speak; propriety, however, forbade him to utter so holy a name. He took a middle way, and gave Consuelo his lorgnette.

"Look," said he, "how well this improvised arch has succeeded. It is a half mile from me, and yet with my lorgnette, which is an excellent one, you may read what is written below. The letters are twenty feet high, though imperceptible to the naked eye."

Consuelo looked at, and easily deciphered the inscription, which revealed everything to her. It was—

"Vivat Fredericus magnus!"

"Count," said she, "it is dangerous for such a personage to travel thus. It is yet more dangerous to entertain him."

"I do not understand you. We are at peace, and no one now would dare to injure him, while in the estates of the empire. Besides, there is nothing unpatriotic in treating him hospitably."

Consuelo was wrapped in a reverie. Hoditz roused her from it, by saying that he had an humble petition to present her. He was afraid of abusing her politeness, but the thing was so important that he could not forbear. After many circumlocutions, he told her that he was anxious she should assume the *role* of the shadow."

"What shadow?" said Consuelo, who thought only of Frederick, and what had just happened.

"The shadow who, after the desert, will come for the margravine and lead her through the Tartarian gallery—where I have placed the ball of the dead—to conduct her into the theatre of Olympus. Venus does not appear until long after you, and you will have time to lay aside the shroud, for the brilliant costume of the mother of the loves. It will be of satin, with bows of silver and of chenille, with a very small hoop; hair without powder; pearls and feathers, roses, &c.,—all will be very elegant, but very decent. You will play the shadow. You must walk with great dignity; and not one of my people will dare say to her highness—'follow me.' It is a very difficult thing to say, and I have fancied a person of genius might make a great part of it. What think you of it?"

"Admirable. I will play the shadow with all my heart," said Consuelo, smiling.

"Ah! you are a perfect angel," said the count, kissing her hand.

But, alas! this fete, this brilliant fete, which the count had taken such care for, and which had required him to make those journeys to Moravia, was all to end in smoke, like the sombre and serious vengeance of Karl. At noon the next day, all was ready. The people of Roswald were under arms—the nymphs, genii, savages, dwarfs, giants, shadows, and mandarins, were all ready to begin their evolutions. The mountain was swept clear of snow and covered with moss. Guests had collected from the neighbouring chateaux, and formed a respectable cortege, when lo! and behold! a thunderbolt overturned all. A courier arrived saying—"that her highness had been upset, and was forced to remain at Olmutz." The crowd dispersed; and the count, accompanied by Karl, who had regained his reason, mounted two of the best horses and set out at once, after having spoken briefly to his major-domo.

The Pleasures, the Rivers, Hours, and the Streamlets, put on their heavy boots and woollen caps, and returned to work, pell-mell, with Chinese pirates and Anthropophagi. The guests got into their carriages, and the berlin, in which Porpora had come, was again harnessed up. The major-domo, in obedience to his orders, gave him the money which he had been promised, and forced him to take it, though it had scarcely been earned. They set out that very day for Prague, the professor, delighted at having gotten rid of the count's music and the many-tongued cantatas of his host; Consuelo, looking with regret on Silesia, and distressed at being unable to extend any aid to the unfortunate prisoner of Glatz.

On the same day, the Baron von Kreutz who had passed the night in a village not far from the Moravian frontier, and who had set out in the morning in a great travelling carriage, escorted by mounted pages and a berlin, which contained his clerk and travelling treasury, said to his lieutenant or rather his aide-de-camp, the Baron von Buddenbrock, as they were about to enter the city of Neisse, (we must remark that, offended at his awkwardness on the previous evening, he had not spoken to him before,)—"What illumination was that I saw over a hill we passed last night?"

"Sire," said the aide, "I saw nothing."

"One who travels with me, should see everything."

"Your majesty must excuse me, on account of the trouble in which the revelation of that rascal plunged me."

"You do not know what you are talking about. That man is an unfortunate Catholic devotee, exasperated by the sermons the Bohemian curates preached about me during the war. He was also aggravated by some personal wrong. He must have been some peasant borne off by my troops, or some of those deserters every now and then overtaken, in spite of all their precautions."

"Your majesty may be certain that to-morrow he will be arrested and again in your power."

"You have then ordered him to be taken from Count Hoditz?"

"No, sire; but so soon as I come to Neisse, I will send four resolute and shrewd men——"

"I forbid you to do so. On the contrary, ascertain all about him. If his family has been victimized by war, as his words seemed to indicate, see that there be paid him one thousand rix dollars, and instruct

the recruiting officers in Silesia, to let him alone. Do you understand me? His name is Karl; he is a Bohemian, and in the service of Count Hoditz. That is enough to enable you to recognise him easily, and to ascertain his family, name, and circumstances."

"Your majesty shall be obeyed."

"I hope so. What did you think of Porpora?"

"He seemed to me a fool: very vain and very self-sufficient. He is ill-tempered, too."

"I think in his art he is a very superior man; full of intellect, and most amusingly ironical. When he has, with his pupil, reached the Prussian frontier, send a carriage to meet him."

"Yes, sire."

"Make him get into it, *alone*. You understand?"

"Yes, sire."

"And then?"

"Your majesty wishes him taken to Berlin?"

"You have lost your brains to-day. Take him to Dresden, and thence to Prague, or any where else he pleases, even to Vienna. Since I have disturbed the arrangement of so honorable a man, I must send him to the place he came from without costing him any thing. I do not wish him to put his foot in my kingdom."

"What are your majesty's orders about the singer?"

"Take her, under an escort, whether she wishes to go or not, to *lans Souci*, and give her a room in the palace."

"In the palace, sire?"

"Yes; are you deaf? Give her the rooms of *la Barberini*."

"What shall we do with the Barberini?"

"The Barberini is not at Berlin. She has gone. Did you not know it?"

"No, sire."

"What then do you know? As soon as she is there, tell me; never mind what the hour may be. You understand? These are my first orders, which I wish you to write No. 1, in the book of my travelling treasury:—the indemnity to Karl, the dismissal of Porpora, and the succession of Porporina to Barberini's honors and emoluments. We are now at the gates of the city. Get into a good humor, Buddenbrock, and try, the next time I wish to be *incognito*, to act less like a fool."

CHAPTER CL

WHEN Porpora and Consuelo reached Prague, it was extremely cold. The moon lighted up the old city, which yet preserved the picturesque and warlike aspect of its history. Our travellers entered it by the gate called Rosthor, and crossing that part on the right bank of the Moldau, reached the centre of the Bridge without difficulty. Just there, the carriage was violently arrested.

"Heavens!" said the postilion, "my horse has stopped at the statue: that is a bad sign. Saint John Népomuck, aid me!"

Consuelo, seeing that the wheel-horse was embarrassed in his traces, and that some time would be needed to fix things again, proposed to the *Maestro* to dismount, and warm themselves by exercise.

The maestro consented, and they approached the parapet to see where they were. From that point, the two distinct cities which compose Prague, of which one, called the new, was built by Charles IV, in 1348, the other, much older, and built like amphi-theatres, seemed two dark mountains of stone. Here and there, from the culminating points, arose, like arrows in the air, old church spires and dentelated fortifications. The Moldau whirled rapidly under the arches of the steep, heavy bridge, which had been the scene of so many events of Bohemian history. The reflection of the moon played around the brow of the venerated statue. Consuelo gazed at the statue of the venerated doctor, who looked apparently at the waves. The legend of Saint Népomuck is beautiful, and his name is venerated by all who love liberty and independence. A confessor of the Empress Jane, he refused to betray the confessions, and the drunken Wenceslaus, who wished to become possessed of a woman's secrets, unable to influence the doctor, had him drowned beneath the bridge of Prague. Tradition says, just as he sank beneath the waters, five stars floated on the water, as if he had left the crown of martyrdom behind. In memory of this, five stars have been incrustated on the balustrade, at the very spot he disappeared.

La Rosmunda, who was very devout, preserved a holy memory of this legend of John Népomuck, and in the enumeration of the saints she made her pure child invoke every night, had never forgotten this, the patron of all journeyers, of persons in danger, and the protector of fair fame. Thus, as the poor dream of boundless wealth, the Zingari made an ideal of what in her youth she had neglected. This had its influence on Consuelo, who knelt amid the crowd of women, pilgrims, beggars, and zingari, children of the mandoline, who now did homage to the saint, and their piety was so great, that she could not but reach forth her hand to them. She gave them large alms, and recalled the time when she had been destitute as they were. Her generosity was so great that they consulted together, and deputed two of their number to tell her they were about to sing one of the hymns of the blessed John Népomuck, that the saint might avert the bad omen which had detained them there. According to what they said, the music and words were old as the days of Wenceslas.

"Suspice quas dedimus Johannes beate,
Tibi preces supplices, noster advocate,
Fieri; dum vivimus ne sinas infames,
Et nostros post obitum cœlis infer manes."

Porpora was glad to hear them, but did not think the hymn more than a century old. He heard a second one, though, which seemed to be a malediction addressed to Wenceslas, by his contemporaries and which began thus:

"Sævus piger imperator
Malorum clarus patrator."

Though Wenceslas' crimes had done no especial harm, it seemed that the Bohemians took exquisite delight in cursing in the name of this tyrant, the abhorred name of imperator, synonymous to them with Stranger. There was an Austrian sentinel at each end of the bridge, and their orders required them to walk to the statue, face about, and return to the *tetes de point*. They were not such good Latin scholars as the ~~about~~ people of Prague, and fancied, perhaps, they heard a praise of Maria Theresa or Francis of Loraine, her husband.

As she heard these chants in the moonlight, in one of the most poetical spots in the world, Consuelo felt deeply penetrated with melancholy. Hitherto her voyage had been gay and happy; and, by a natural reaction, she became at once intensely sad. The postilion, who was reharnessing with due Germanic slowness, repeated from time to time, the words "a bad omen," so that it had its influence on Consuelo. Every prolonged meditation, every deep reverie ended in her thinking of Albert. She remembered that one evening she had heard the canoness invoke Saint Népomuck aloud, and Albert had said, "That, aunt, is well enough for you who have taken the precaution to assure your own salvation by an exemplary life, but I have often seen persons sullied by crime, invoke the aid of this saint, to conceal their hidden offences from man. Thus practical devotees put on the mantle of deceit, quite as often as innocence." Just then Consuelo fancied she heard Albert's voice mingle in her ear with the murmur of evening, and the ripple of the Moldau. She asked what he, who, perchance, thought her so depraved, would think if he saw her prostrated before the image of the saint. Half in terror, she arose. Just then, Porpora said, "Come, all is ready."

She followed him, and was about to get into the carriage, when a large man, mounted on a horse, larger even in proportion than he was, stopped short, dismounted, and approaching her, seemed to look at her with a curiosity which seemed almost impertinent.

"What are you about, sir?" said Porpora. It may be the fashion in Prague, to examine ladies in this way; but, at all events, I am not disposed to submit to it."

The large man took the furs from his neck, still holding his horse by the bridle. He replied to Porpora in Bohemian, without seeing that the latter did not understand a word he said. Consuelo, however, struck by his voice, moved forward to see distinctly, and passing immediately between him and Porpora, said: "Is it you, Baron von Rudolstadt?"

"Yes, signora, it is I, Baron Frederick, brother of Christian and uncle of Albert. And is it really yourself?" said he, with a sigh.

Consuelo was amazed at his air, and at his cold manner. He had always exhibited the most chivalric gallantry to her, and now did not kiss his hand or even touch his furred bonnet. He did but say, in a remiss and almost careless air, "Is it really yourself?—really?"

"Tell me about Riesenbergl," said Consuelo, with agitation.

"I will, signora—I will."

"Well, baron—tell me about Count Christian, and the canoness, and——"

"Ah! yes—I will," said Frederick, becoming more and more stupefied.

"And Count Albert?" said Consuelo, frightened at his expression.

"Yes, yes—Albert—alas! yes," said the baron, "I will."

He did not speak, however, and stood almost motionless as the statue.

Porpora began to grow impatient. He was cold, and anxious to get on. Besides, this meeting, which affected Consuelo very much, might seriously alter his plans.

"Baron," said he, "to-morrow we will have the honor to wait on you. Let us now, however, get some supper, and warm ourselves. That will do us more good than compliments," added he, between his teeth, springing into the carriage, into which he had almost forced Consuelo.

"But, my friend," said she, "let me find out——"

"Let me alone," said he, quickly. "That man is an idiot, or else drunk, and will keep us all night on the bridge, without saying a word we can understand."

Consuelo was in a terrible state of anxiety.

"You are not kind," said she to him, while the carriage was passing over the bridge, at the entrance of the old city. "In one moment, I would have heard what interests me more than anything in the world."

"Ah! you have not done with that yet?" said the maestro. "This Albert is everlastingly in your mind. They are a pleasant family according to all appearance, and especially judging from that great fellow who has his cap pushed down over his brow. He was not even civil enough to lift it up when he saw you."

"Into that family you once placed me, advising me to be dignified and respectful as possible; therefore you must have had the greatest respect for it."

"In one point of view, you obeyed me but too well."

Consuelo was about to reply: she, however, calmed herself when she saw the baron had again mounted, and apparently had made up his mind to follow the carriage. She found the old noble at the door way, offering her his hand, and doing all the honors of the house, for he had ordered the postilion to take them to his own residence, and not to an inn. Porpora wished to decline his hospitality. Consuelo and the baron insisted on his coming in, for the former wished to clear up all doubts, and at once went into the hall.

"You are here, signora," said the baron. "I relied on you—I had expected you."

"That is very strange," said Consuelo; "for I had told no one of my intention to come. Three days ago we did not expect to come until the day after to-morrow."

"This does not amaze you more than it does me," said the baron, in a most desponding manner.

"Where, however, is the Baroness Amelia," said Consuelo, ashamed of not having thought of her early friend.

A cloud came over the face of the Baron of Rudolstadt, and his ruddy complexion became at once so deadly pale that Consuelo was alarmed. He said, however, calmly:—

"My daughter is in Saxony, with one of my relations. She will be very sorry that she did not see you."

"And the rest of your family, baron! May I ask about them?" said Consuelo.

"Yes, you shall know all. Eat, Signora, for you must be hungry."

"I cannot eat until you relieve my anxiety. Tell me, baron, is any one of the family dead?"

"No one," said the baron, sadly, as if he had announced the extinction of his whole household. He at once began to carve with the solemn slowness which was always observed at Riesenbergl. Consuelo did not wish to question him. The meal to her seemed to consume an infinitude of time. Porpora, who, less uneasy than hungry, sought to talk with his host; and the latter sought to reply kindly, and even to question him about his plans and schemes. This exertion was evidently too much for his power. He made no reply, or renewed his questions a moment after they had been answered.

Consuelo saw there was something strange about him, and yet was

satisfied that he was not drunk. She did not inquire whether this sudden decay was the result of inebriation or not, of malady or old age. At last, after two hours of torment, the baron, seeing that the meal was over, and after having, in an air of half amazement, felt in his pockets, took out an open letter from the canoness, which he gave to Consuelo. It was as follows:—

"We are lost, dear brother. We have no longer any hope. Doctor Supperville has at last come from Bareith, and, after having been some days with us, says, that we must arrange all our family matters, for Albert probably will not be alive in ten days. Christian, to whom I have not been able to tell what the doctor says, yet flatters himself. But that is not all; for I am not sure that our nephew's death is the only trouble he apprehends. Frederick, we are lost! Can we survive such disasters? For my own part, I can but say, 'God's will be done!' Come to us, dear brother, and try to infuse courage in us, if any remains in your bosom, after your own misfortune—which we participate in, and which adds to the sorrows of a family that might almost call itself cursed. What have we done to deserve all this? May God protect me from a want of faith and submission; but really there are times when I think my burdens are too great.

"Come, brother: we expect you; and yet do not leave Prague before the eleventh. I wish to charge you with a strange commission. I think I am mad in doing so. I conform, however, to Albert's wishes blindly. On the eleventh instant be on the bridge of Prague, at the foot of the statue. Stop the first carriage that passes, and take it to your house. If on that very night it can leave for Riesenbergh, Albert perhaps will be saved—at least, he says it will win him eternal life. I do not know what he means by that. During the last eight days he has had the most extraordinary revelations of things we know nothing of, that I can no longer doubt he has the gift of looking into hidden things. He called me this evening to his bed side, and in the half-stifled voice with which he now speaks, bade me write to you what I have faithfully done. Be there at eleven, at the foot of the statue, and bring whomsoever you find in the carriage here at once."

When she had read the letter, Consuelo grew paler than the baron. She arose, but immediately fell back in her chair, with her hands contracted and her teeth fixed. She recovered her strength at once, however, when she arose and said to the baron, whose torpor had returned—"Baron, is your carriage ready? I am ready to set out at once!"

The baron rose mechanically and left. He had prepared everything in advance. The carriage was ready, the horses were in the yard, but he seemed a mere automaton; and but for Consuelo, he would not thought of going.

No sooner had he left the chamber than Porpora took the letter and read it. He, too, became pale, and walked before the stove, a prey to a terrible indisposition. The maestro could not but reproach himself with all that had happened. He had not foreseen, and saw now that he should have done so. A prey to remorse and fear, and feeling overcome by the strange power of divination which had revealed to the invalid the possibility of seeing Consuelo, he felt as if he was a prey to some strange dream.

As no organization was, in certain respects, more positive than his, and as no one had a more tenacious will, he began at once to think of the consequences of the sudden resolution Consuelo had formed. He

was much excited, struck his brow with his hands, and walked up and down the room. He wrung every joint, found courage, and, braving suspicion, bade Consuelo to revive, while he struck her violently.

"You wish to go," said he. "I am willing. You wish to see Albert. You wish to give him the final blow. There is no means of avoiding it. We have two days to spare. We should pass them at Dresden, but we will not be able to rest there. If we are not on the Prussian frontier by the eighteenth, we shall not be able to keep our engagements. The theatre opens on the twenty-fifth, and if you are not ready I will have to pay a considerable fine. I have but half the necessary sum, and in Prussia any one who cannot pay goes to prison. Once in prison, a man is forgotten, and ten, twenty years await you—until death comes. This is what awaits me, if you do not leave Riesenbergl at five o'clock on the morning of the fourteenth."

"Do not be uneasy, maestro," said Consuelo, with all the energy of resolution, "I have already thought of that. Do not make me uneasy at Riesenbergl, and we leave at the time you say."

"You must swear to do so."

"I will," said she, shrugging her shoulders impatiently. "When your life or liberty are at stake, I fancy you need no oath."

Just then the baron came in, followed by an old intelligent servant, who wrapped him up in a pelisse as if he had been a child, and took him to his carriage. They soon came to Beraun, and were at Pilsen before daybreak.

CHAPTER CII.

FROM Pilsen to Tauss they went as rapidly as possible, but much time was lost by the roads running through almost impenetrable forests, in passing which passengers underwent more than one danger. At last, after travelling scarcely more than a league an hour, they came to the Giants' Castle. Consuelo had never had a more fatiguing or a more disagreeable journey. The Baron of Rudolstadt seemed almost paralyzed, so indolent and gouty had he become. Only a year before, Consuelo had seen him strong as a boxer. Then, his iron frame was animated by a stout heart. He had ever obeyed his instincts; and at the first impression of unexpected misfortune, he had been crushed. The pity with which he inspired Consuelo increased her uneasiness. She said to herself "Shall I find all the inmates of Riesenbergl in this condition?"

The drawbridge was down, and the grating open. The servants stood in the hall with burning torches. No one was able to speak a word to the servants. Porpora, seeing that the baron could scarcely walk, took him by the arm and attempted to aid him, while Consuelo hurried rapidly up the main entrance.

She met the canoness in the doorway, and without even pausing to speak the common-place salutations, took her by the arm, and said—

"Follow me; we have not a moment to lose. Albert begins to grow impatient. He has counted the hours and minutes till your arrival, and announced your approach a moment before we heard the sound of your carriage wheels. He had no doubt on his mind of your coming; but he said, if any accident should happen to detain you, it

would be too late. Come, signora; and in the name of Heaven do not oppose any of his wishes; promise all he asks, pretend to love him, and if it must be, practise a friendly deceit. Albert's hours are numbered, his life draws to a close. Endeavor to soothe his sufferings, it is all that we ask of you."

Thus saying, Wenceslawa led Consuelo in the direction of the great saloon.

"He is up then—he is not confined to his chamber?" exclaimed Consuelo, hastily.

"He no longer rises, for he never retires to bed," replied the canoness. "For thirty days he has sat in his arm-chair in the saloon, and will not be removed elsewhere. The doctor says he must not be opposed on this point, and that he would die if he were moved. Take courage, signora, you are about to behold a terrible spectacle."

The canoness opened the door of the saloon, and added—

"Fly to him; you need not fear to surprise him, for he expects you, and has seen you coming hours ago."

Consuelo darted towards her betrothed, who, as the canoness had said, was seated in a large arm-chair beside the fire-place. It was no longer a man—it was a spectre which she beheld. His face still beautiful, notwithstanding the ravages of disease, was as a face of marble. There was no smile on his lips—no ray of joy in his eyes. The doctor, who held his arm and felt his pulse, let it fall gently, and looked at the canoness, as much as to say—"It is too late." Consuelo knelt before him; he looked fixedly at her, but said nothing. At last he signed with his finger to the canoness, who had learned to interpret all his wishes. She took his arms, which he was no longer able to raise, and placed them on Consuelo's shoulder. Then she made the young girl lay her head on Albert's bosom, and as the voice of the dying man was gone, he was merely able to whisper in her ear—"I am happy." He remained in this position for about two minutes, the head of his beloved resting on his bosom, and his lips pressed to her raven hair. Then he looked at his aunt, and by some hardly perceptible movement he made her understand that his father and his aunt were both to kiss his betrothed.

"From my very heart!" exclaimed the canoness, embracing Consuelo with deep emotion. Then she raised her to conduct her to Count Christian, whom Consuelo had not hitherto perceived.

Seated in a second arm-chair, placed opposite his son's at the other side of the fire-place, the old count seemed almost as much weakened and reduced. He was still able to rise, however, and take a few steps through the saloon; but he was obliged to be carried every evening to his bed, which had been placed in an adjoining room. At that moment he held his brother's hand in one of his, and Porpora's in the other. He then left them to embrace Consuelo fervently several times. The almoner of the chateau came also in his turn to salute her, in order to gratify Albert. He also seemed like a spectre, notwithstanding his *embonpoint* which had only increased; but his paleness was frightful. The habits of an indolent and effeminate life had so enervated him that he could not endure the sorrow of others. The canoness alone retained energy for all. A bright, red spot shone on each cheek, and her eyes burnt with a feverish brightness. Albert alone appeared calm. His brow was calm as a sleeping infant's, and his physical prostration did not seem to have affected his mental powers. He was grave, and not like his father and uncle, dejected.

In the midst of these different victims to disease or sorrow, the physician's calm and healthful countenance offered a striking contrast to all that surrounded him. Supperville was a Frenchman who had formerly been attached to the household of Frederick when the latter was only crown prince. Early aware of the despotic fault-finding turn which lurked in the prince, he fixed himself at Bareith, in the service of Sophia Wilhelmina, sister to the King of Prussia. At once jealous and ambitious, Supperville was the very model of a courtier. An indifferent physician, in spite of the local reputation he enjoyed, he was a complete man of the world, a keen observer, and tolerably conversant with the moral springs of disease. He had urged the canons to satisfy all the desires of her nephew, and had hoped something from the return of her for whom Albert was dying. But, however he might reckon his pulse and examine his countenance after Consuelo's arrival, he did not the less continue to reiterate that the time was past, and he determined to take his departure, in order not to witness scenes of despair which it was no longer in his power to avert.

He resolved, however, whether in conformity with some interested scheme, or merely to gratify his natural taste of intrigue, to make himself busy in family affairs; and seeing that no person in this bewildered family thought of turning the passing moments to account, he led Consuelo into the embrasure of a window, and addressed her as follows:—

“Mademoiselle, a doctor is in some sort a confessor, and I therefore soon became aware of the secret passion which hurries this young man to the grave. As a medical man, accustomed habitually to investigate the laws of the physical world which do not really vary, I must say that I do not believe in the strange vision and ecstatic revelations of the young count. As regards yourself, it is easy to ascribe them to secret communication with you, relative to your journey to Prague and your subsequent arrival here.”

And as Consuelo made a sign in the negative, he continued:

“I do not question you, mademoiselle, and my conjectures need not offend you. Rather confide in me, and look upon me as entirely devoted to your interests.”

“I do not understand you, sir,” replied Consuelo, with a candor which was far from convincing the court doctor.

“Perhaps you will understand presently mademoiselle,” he coolly rejoined. “The young count's relations have vehemently opposed the marriage up to this day. But now their opposition is at an end. Albert is about to die, and as he wishes to leave you his fortune, they cannot object to a religious ceremony that will secure it to you for ever.”

“Alas! what matters Albert's fortune to me,” said the bereaved Consuelo; “what has that to do with his present situation? It is not business that brings me here, sir; I came to endeavor to save him. Is there no hope then?”

“None! This disease, entirely proceeding from the mind, is amongst those which baffles all our skill. It is not a month since the young count, after an absence of fifteen days, the cause of which no one could explain, returned to his home attacked by a disease at once sudden and incurable. All the functions of life were as if suspended. For thirty days he has swallowed no sort of food; and it is a rare exception, only witnessed in the case of the insane, to see life supported by a few drops of liquid daily, and a few minutes sleep each night. His

vital powers, as you perceive, are now quite exhausted, and in a couple of days at the farthest he will have ceased to suffer. Arm yourself with courage then; do not lose your presence of mind. I am here to aid you, and you have only to act boldly."

Consuelo was still gazing at the doctor with astonishment, when the canoness, on a sign from the patient, interrupted their colloquy by summoning him to Albert's side.

On his approach, Albert whispered in his ear for a longer period than his feebleness would have seemed to permit. Superville turned red and pale alternately. The canoness looked at them anxiously, burning to know what wish Albert expressed.

"Doctor," said Albert, "I heard all you said just now to that young lady."

The doctor, who had spoken in a low whisper and at the farthest extremity of the saloon, became exceedingly confused at this remark, and his convictions respecting the impossibility of any superhuman faculty were so shaken that he stared wildly at Albert, unable to utter a word.

"Doctor," continued the dying man, "you do not understand that heavenly creature's soul, and you only interfere with my design by alarming her delicacy. She shares none of your ideas respecting money. She never coveted my fortune or my title. She never loved me, and it is to her pity alone you must appeal. Speak to her heart. I am nearer my end than you suppose; lose no time. I cannot expire happy if I do not carry with me into the night of my repose the title of her husband."

"But what do you mean by these last words," said Superville, who at that moment was solely busied in analyzing the mental disease of his patient.

"You could not understand them," replied Albert, with an effort, "but she will understand them. You have only to repeat them faithfully to her."

"Count," said Superville, raising his voice a little, "I find I cannot succeed in interpreting your ideas clearly; you have just spoken with more force and distinctness than you have done for the last eight days, and I cannot but draw a favorable augury from it. Speak to mademoiselle yourself; a word from you will convince her more than all I could say. There she is; let her take my place and listen to you."

Superville in fact found himself completely at fault in an affair which he thought he had understood perfectly; and thinking he had said enough to Consuelo to insure her gratitude in the event of her realizing the fortune, he retired, after Albert had further said to him:—

"Remember what you promised. The time has arrived; speak to my relatives. Let them consent, and delay not. The hour is at hand."

Albert was so exhausted by the effort he had just made, that he leaned his forehead on Consuelo's breast when she approached him, and remained for some moments in this position, as if at the point of death. His white lips turned livid, and Porpora, terrified, feared that he had uttered his last sigh. During this time Superville had collected Count Christian, the baron, the canoness, and chaplain, round the fire-place, and addressed them earnestly. The chaplain was the only person who ventured on an objection, which, although apparently faint, was in reality as powerful as the old priest could urge.

"If your excellencies demand it," said he, "I shall lend my sacred

functions to the celebration of this marriage. But Count Albert, not being at present in a state of grace, must first through confession and extreme unction make his peace with the church."

"Extreme unction!" said the canoness, with a stifled groan. "Gracious God! is it come to that?"

"It is even so," replied Supperville, who, as a man of the world and a disciple of the Voltaire school of philosophy, detested both the chaplain and his objections; "yes, it is even so, and without remedy. If his reverence the chaplain insists on this point, and is bent on tormenting Count Albert by the dreary apparatus of death."

"And do you think," said Count Christian, divided between his sense of devotion and his paternal tenderness, "that a gayer ceremony, and one more congenial with his wishes might prolong his days?"

"I can answer positively for nothing," replied Supperville, "but I venture to anticipate much good from it. Your excellency consented to this marriage formerly."

"I always consented to it. I never opposed it," said the count designedly raising his voice; "it was Master Porpora who wrote to say that he would never consent, and that she likewise had renounced all idea of it. Alas!" he added, lowering his voice, "it was the death blow to my poor child."

"You hear what my father says," murmured Albert in Consuelo's ear, "but do not grieve for it. I believed you had abandoned me, and I gave myself up to despair; but during the last eight days I have regained my reason, which they call my madness. I have read hearts as others open books—I have read, with one glance, the past, the present, and the future. I learned, in short, that you were faithful, Consuelo; that you had endeavored to love me; and that you had, indeed, for a time succeeded. But they deceived us both; forgive your master, as I forgive him."

Consuelo looked at Porpora, who could not indeed catch Albert's words, but who, on hearing those of Count Christian, was much agitated, and walked up and down before the fire with hurried strides. She looked at him with an air of solemn reproach; and the maestro understood her so well that he struck his forehead violently with his clenched hand. Albert signed to Consuelo to bring the maestro close to his couch, and to assist him to hold out his hand. Porpora pressed the cold fingers to his lips, and burst into tears. His conscience reproached him with homicide; but his sincere and heartfelt repentance palliated in some measure his fatal error.

Albert made a sign that he wished to listen what reply his relations made to the doctor, and he heard it, though they spoke so low that Porpora and Consuelo, who were kneeling by his side, could not distinguish a word.

The chaplain withstood, as well as he could, Supperville's bitter irony, while the canoness sought by a mixture of superstition and tolerance, of Christian charity and maternal tenderness, to conciliate what was irreconcilable to the Catholic faith. The question was merely one of form—that is to say, whether the chaplain would consider it right to administer the marriage sacrament to a heretic, unless indeed the latter would conform to the Catholic faith immediately afterwards. Supperville indeed did not hesitate to say that Count Albert had promised to profess and believe anything after the ceremony was over; but the chaplain was not to be duped. At last, Count Christian, call-

ing to his aid that quiet firmness and plain good sense with which, although after much weakness and hesitation, he had always put an end to domestic differences, spoke as follows:—

“Reverend Sir,” said he to the chaplain, “there is no ecclesiastical law which expressly forbids the marriage of a Catholic to a schismatic. The church tolerates these alliances. Consider Consuelo then as orthodox, my son as a heretic, and marry them at once. Confession and betrothal, as you are aware, are but matters of precept, and in certain cases may be dispensed with. Some favorable change may result from this marriage, and when Albert is cured it will then be time to speak of his conversion.”

The chaplain had never opposed the wishes of Count Christian, who was in his eyes a superior arbiter in cases of conscience even to the pope himself. There only now remained to convince Consuelo. This Albert alone thought of, and drawing her towards him, he succeeded in clasping the neck of his beloved with his emaciated and shadowy arms.

“Consuelo,” said he, “I read at this hour in your soul that you would give your life to restore mine. That is no longer possible; but you can restore me forever by a simple act of your will. I leave you for a time, but I shall soon return to earth under some new form. I shall return unhappy and wretched if you now abandon me. You know that the crimes of Ziska still remain unexpiated, and you alone, my sister Wanda, can purify me in the new phase of my existence. We are brethren, to become lovers, death must cast his gloomy shadow between us. But we must, by a solemn engagement, become man and wife, that in my new birth I may regain my calmness and strength, and become, like other men, freed from the dreary memories of the past. Only consent to this engagement; it will not bind you in this life, which I am about to quit, but it will unite us in eternity. It will be a pledge whereby we can recognize each other, should death affect the clearness of our recollections. Consent; it is but a ceremony of the church which I accept, since it is the only one which in the estimation of men can sanction our mutual relation. This I must carry with me to the tomb. A marriage without the assent of my family would be incomplete in my eyes. Ours shall be indissoluble in our hearts, as it is sacred in intention. Consent!”

“I consent!” exclaimed Consuelo, pressing her lips to the pale, cold forehead of her betrothed.

These words were heard by all.

“Well,” said Superville, “let us hasten;” and he urged the chaplain vigorously, who summoned the domestics and gave them instructions to have everything prepared for the ceremony. Count Christian, a little revived, sat close beside his son and Consuelo. The good can-
oness thanked the latter warmly for her condescension, and was so much affected as even to kneel before her and kiss her hands. Baron Frederick wept in silence, without appearing to know what was going on. In the twinkling of an eye an altar was erected in the great saloon. The domestics were dismissed; they thought it was only the last rites of the church which were about to be administered, and that the patient required silence and fresh air. Porpora and Superville served as witnesses. Albert found strength sufficient to pronounce the decisive *yes* and the other forms which the ceremony required, in a clear and sonorous voice, and the family from this received a lively hope of his recovery. Hardly had the chaplain recited

the closing prayer over the newly-married couple, ere Albert arose, threw himself into his father's arms and embraced him, as well as his aunt, his uncle, and Porpora, earnestly and rapidly; then seating himself in his arm-chair, he pressed Consuelo to his heart and exclaimed:—

"I am saved!"

"It is the final effort, the last convulsion of nature," said Supperville, who had several times examined the features, and felt the pulse of the patient, while the marriage ceremony was proceeding.

In fact Albert's arms loosed their hold, fell forward, and rested on his knees. His aged and faithful dog, Cynabre, who had not left his feet during the whole period of his illness, raised his head and uttered thrice a dismal howl. Albert's gaze was rivetted on Consuelo; his lips remained apart as if about to address her; a faint glow animated his cheek, and then gradually that peculiar and indescribable shade which is the forerunner of death, crept from his forehead down to his lips, and by degrees overshadowed his whole face as with a snowy veil. The silence of terror which brooded over the breathless and attentive group of spectators was interrupted by the doctor, who, in solemn accents, pronounced the irrevocable decree—"It is the hand of death!"

CHAPTER CIII.

COUNT CHRISTIAN fell back senseless in his chair. The canoness, sobbing convulsively, flung herself on Albert's remains, as if she hoped by her caresses to rouse him to life again, while Baron Frederick uttered some unmeaning words with a sort of idiotic calm. Supperville approached Consuelo, whose utter immobility terrified him more than the agitation of the others.

"Do not trouble yourself about me, sir," she said; "nor you either, my friend," added she, addressing Porpora, who hastened to add his condolence, "but remove his unhappy relatives, and endeavor to sustain and comfort them; as for me, I shall remain here. The dead need nothing but respect and prayers."

The count and the baron suffered themselves to be led away without resistance; and as for the canoness, she was carried, cold and apparently lifeless, to her apartment, where Supperville followed to give assistance. Porpora, no longer knowing where he was or what he did, rushed out and wandered through the gardens like an insane person. He felt as if suffocated. His habitual insensibility was more apparent than real. Scenes of grief and terror had excited his impressionable imagination, and he hastened onward by the light of the moon, pursued by gloomy voices which chaunted a frightful *Dieu tra* incessantly in his ears.

Consuelo remained alone with Albert; for hardly had the chaplain begun to recite the prayers for the dead, when he fainted away, and was borne off in his turn. The poor man had insisted on sitting up along with the canoness during the whole of Albert's illness, and was utterly exhausted. The Countess of Rudolstadt, kneeling by the side of her husband, and holding his cold hands in hers, her head pressed against his which beat no longer, fell into deep abstraction. What Con-

Consuelo experienced at this moment was not exactly pain; at least it was not that bitter regret which accompanies the loss of beings necessary to our daily happiness. Her regard for Albert was not of this intimate character, and his death left no apparent void in her existence. The despair of losing those whom we love, not unfrequently resolves itself into selfishness and abhorrence of the new duties imposed upon us. One part of this grief is legitimate and proper; the other is not so, and it should be combated, though it is just as natural. Nothing of all this mingled with the solemn and tender melancholy of Consuelo. Albert's nature was foreign to her own in every respect, except in one—the admiration, respect, and sympathy with which he had inspired her. She had chalked out a plan of life without him, and had even renounced the idea of an affection which, until two days before, she had thought extinct. What now remained to her was the desire and duty of proving faithful to a sacred pledge. Albert had been already dead as regarded her; he was now nothing more, and was perhaps even less so in some respects, for Consuelo, long exalted by intercourse with his lofty soul, had come in her dreamy reverie to adopt in a measure some of his poetical convictions. The belief in the transmission of souls had received a strong foundation in her instinctive repugnance towards the idea of eternal punishment after death, and in her Christian faith in the immortality of the soul. Albert, alive, but prejudiced against her by appearances, seemed as if wrapped in a veil, transported into another existence incomplete in comparison with that which he had proposed to devote to pure and lofty affection and unshaken confidence. But Albert, restored to this faith in her and to his enthusiastic affection, and yielding up his last breath on her bosom—had he then ceased to exist as regarded her? Did he not live in all the plenitude of a cloudless existence in passing under the triumphal arch of a glorious death, which conducted him either to a temporary repose, or to immediate consciousness in a purer and more heavenly state of being? To die struggling with one's own weakness, and to awake endowed with strength; to die forgiving the wicked, and to awake under the influence and protection of the upright; to die in sincere repentance, and to awake absolved and purified by the innate influence of virtue—are not these heavenly rewards?

Consuelo, already initiated by Albert into doctrines which had their origin among the Hussites of old Bohemia, as well as among the mysterious sects of preceding ages, who had humbly endeavored to interpret the words of Christ—Consuelo, I repeat, convinced, more from her gentle and affectionate nature than by the force of reasoning, that the soul of her husband was not suddenly removed from her for ever, and carried into regions inaccessible to human sympathies, mingled with this belief some of the superstitious ideas of her childhood. She had believed in spirits as the common people believe in them, and had more than once dreamed that she saw her mother approach to protect and shield her from danger. It was a sort of belief in the eternal communion of the souls of the living and the dead—a simple and childlike faith, which has ever existed, as it were, against that creed which would for ever separate the spirits of the departed from this lower world, and assign them a perfectly different and far distant sphere of action.

Consuelo, still kneeling by Albert's remains, could not bring herself to believe that he was dead, and could not comprehend the dread na-

ture either of the word or of the reality. It did not seem possible that life could pass away so soon, and that the functions of heart and brain had ceased for ever. "No," thought she, "the divine spark still lingers, and hesitates to return to the hand which gave it, and who is about to resume his gift in order to send it forth under a renewed form into some loftier sphere. There is still, perhaps, a mysterious life existing in the yet warm bosom; and besides, wherever the soul of Albert is, it sees, understands, knows all that has taken place here. It seeks, perhaps, some aliment in my love—an impulsive power to aid it in some new and heavenly career." And, filled with these vague thoughts, she continued to love Albert, to open her soul to him, to express her devotion to him, to repeat her oath of fidelity—in short, in feeling and idea, to treat him, not as a departed spirit for whom one weeps without hope, but as a sleeping friend, whose awakening smiles he joyfully await.

When Porpora had become more composed, he thought with terror of the situation in which he had left his pupil, and hastened to rejoin her. He was surprised to find her as calm as if she had watched by the bedside of a sleeping friend. He would have spoken to her, and urged her to take some repose.

"Do not utter unmeaning words," said she, "in presence of this sleeping angel. Do you retire to rest, my dear master; I shall remain here."

"Would you then kill yourself?" said Porpora, in despair.

"No, my friend, I shall live," replied Consuelo; "I shall fulfil all my duties towards *him* and towards you; but not for one instant shall I leave his side this night."

When morning came all was still. An overpowering drowsiness had deadened all sense of suffering. The physician, exhausted by fatigue, had retired to rest. Porpora slumbered in his chair, his head supported on Count Christian's bed. Consuelo alone felt no desire to abandon her post. The count was unable to leave his bed, but Baron Frederick, his sister, and the chaplain, proceeded almost mechanically to offer up their prayers before the altar; after which they began to speak of the interment. The canoness, regaining strength when necessity required her services, summoned her woman and old Hans to aid her in the necessary duties. Porpora and the doctor then insisted on Consuelo taking some repose, and she yielded to their entreaties, after first paying a visit to Count Christian, who apparently did not recognise her. It was hard to say whether he waked or slept, for his eyes were open, his respiration calm, and his face without expression.

When Consuelo awoke, after a few hours' repose, she returned to the saloon, but was struck with dismay to find it empty. Albert had been laid upon a bier, and carried to the chapel. His arm-chair was empty, and in the same position where Consuelo had formerly seen it. It was all that remained to remind her of him in this place, where every hope and aspiration of the family had been centred for so many bitter days. Even his dog had vanished. The summer sun lighted up the sombre wainscoating of the apartment, while the merry call of the blackbirds sounded from the garden with insolent gaiety. Consuelo passed on to the adjoining apartment, the door of which was half opened. Count Christian, who still kept his couch, lay apparently insensible to the loss he had just sustained, and his sister watched over him with the same vigilant attention that she had for

merely shown to Albert. The baron gazed at the burning logs with a stupefied air; but the silent tears which trickled down his aged cheeks showed that bitter memory was still busy with his heart.

Consuelo approached the canoness to kiss her hand, but the old lady drew it back from her with evident marks of aversion. Poor Wenceslawa only beheld in her the destroyer of her nephew. At first she had held the marriage in detestation, and had opposed it with all her might; but when she had seen that time and absence alike failed to induce Albert to renounce his engagement, and that his reason, life, and health depended on it, she had come to desire it, as much as she had before hated and repelled it. Porpora's refusal, the exclusive passion for the theatre which he ascribed to Consuelo, and, in short, all the officious and fatal falsehoods which he had despatched in succession to Count Christian, without ever adverting to the letters which Consuelo had written, but which he had suppressed—had occasioned the old man infinite suffering, and aroused in the canoness's breast the bitterest indignation. She felt nothing but hate and contempt for Consuelo. She could pardon her, she said, for having perverted Albert's reason through this fatal attachment, but she could not forgive her for having so basely betrayed him? Every look of the poor aunt, who knew not that the real enemy of Albert's peace was Porpora, seemed to say, "You have destroyed our child; you could not restore him again; and now the disgrace of your alliance is all that remains to us."

This silent declaration of war hastened Consuelo's resolve to comfort, so far as might be, the canoness for this last misfortune. "May I request," said she, "that your ladyship will favor me with a private interview? I must leave this to-morrow ere daybreak; but before setting out I would fain make known my respectful intentions."

"Your intentions? Oh, I can easily guess them," replied the canoness, bitterly. "Do not be uneasy, mademoiselle, all shall be as it ought to be, and the rights which the law yields you shall be strictly respected."

"I perceive you do not comprehend me, madam," replied Consuelo. "I therefore long——"

"Well," since I must drain the bitter cup to the dregs," said the canoness, rising, "let it be now, while I have still courage to endure it. Follow me, signora. My eldest brother appears to slumber, and Supperville, who has consented to remain another day, will take my place for half an hour."

She rang, and desired the doctor to be sent for, then turning to the baron——

"Brother," said she, "your cares are useless, since Christian is still unconscious of his misfortune. He may never be otherwise—happily for him, but most unhappily for us! Perhaps insensibility is but the forerunner of death. I have now only you in the world, my brother; take care of your health, which this dreary inaction has only too much affected already. You were always accustomed to air and exercise. Go out, take your gun, the huntsman will follow with the dogs. Do, I entreat you for my sake; it is the doctor's orders, as well as your sister's prayer. Do not refuse me; it is the greatest consolation you can bestow on my unhappy old age."

The baron hesitated, but at last yielded the point. The servants led him out, and he followed them like a child. The doctor examined Count Christian who still seemed hardly conscious, though he an

swered any questions which were put to him with gentle indifference, and appeared to recognise those around him. "After all," said Superville, "he is not so ill; and if he pass a good night, all may turn out well."

Wenceslawa, a little consoled, left her brother in the doctor's care, and conducted Consuelo to a large apartment, richly decorated in an antique fashion, where she had never been before. It contained a large state-bed, the curtains of which had not been stirred for more than twenty years. It was that in which Wanda Prachalitz, the mother of Count Albert had breathed her last sigh, for this had been her apartment. "It was here," said the canoness, with a solemn air, after having closed the door, "that we found Albert—it is now two and thirty days since—after an absence of thirteen. From that day to this he never entered it again; nor did he once quit the arm-chair where yesterday he expired."

The dry, cold manner with which the canoness uttered this funeral announcement struck a dagger to Consuelo's heart. She then took from her girdle her inseparable bunch of keys, walked towards a large cabinet of sculptured oak, and opened both its doors. Consuelo saw that it contained a perfect mountain of jewels, tarnished by age, of a strange fashion, the larger portion antique, and enriched by diamonds and precious stones of considerable value. "These," said the canoness to her, "are the family jewels, which were the property of my sister-in-law, Count Christian's wife, before her marriage; here, in this partition, are my grandmother's, which my brothers and myself made her a present of; and lastly, here are those which her husband bought for her. All these descended to her son Albert, and henceforth belong to you, as his widow. Take them, and do not fear that any one here will dispute with you these riches, to which we attach no importance, and with which we have nothing more to do. The title-deeds of my nephew's maternal inheritance will be placed in your hands within an hour. All is in order, as I told you; and as to those of his paternal inheritance, you will not, alas! have probably long to wait for them. Such was Albert's last wishes. My promise to act in conformity with them had, in his eyes, all the force of a will."

"Madam," replied Consuelo, closing the cabinet with a movement of disgust, "I should have torn the will had there been one, and I pray you now to take back your word. I have no more need than you for all these riches. It seems to me that my life would be forever stained by the possession of them. If Albert bequeathed them to me, it was doubtless with the idea that conformably to his feelings and habits, I would distribute them to the poor. But I should be a bad dispenser of these noble charities; I have neither the talents nor the knowledge necessary to make a useful disposition of them. It is to you, madam, who unite to those qualities a Christian spirit as generous as that of Albert, it belongs to employ this inheritance in works of charity. I relinquish to you my rights, (if indeed I can be said to have any,) of which I am ignorant, and wish always to remain so. I claim from your goodness only one favor, viz., that you will never wound my feelings by renewing such offers."

The canoness changed her expression, but could not condescend to admire her. She asked—

"But what do you intend to do " looking fixedly at her. "You have no fortune."

"I beg your pardon, I am rich enough. My tastes are simple, and I am fond of art."

"Then you expect to resume what you call your business?"

"I am forced to do so, madam, from reasons which do not permit me to hesitate, notwithstanding my present distress."

"And you are unwilling to sustain your new rank in society in any other manner?"

"What rank?"

"That of Albert's widow."

"I never will forget that I am the widow of the noble-hearted Albert, and my conduct shall be worthy of the husband I have lost."

"But the Countess of Rudolstadt expects to return to the stage!"

"There is no Countess Rudolstadt, nor will there be, after you, except your niece, Amelia."

"Do you scoff at me by mentioning her name?" said the canonesse, who started as if she had been touched with a heated iron.

"Why, madam?" said Consuelo, and her candor was too apparent to permit it to be mistaken, "Tell me, for heaven's sake, why the young baroness is not here? Can she be dead, too?"

"No," said the canonesse, bitterly, "would she were. Let us not, however, talk of her."

"I must, madam, remind you of something I had not before thought of. She is the only and lawful heiress of your family titles. This must put your mind at rest in relation to Albert's depositions. The laws do not permit you to make any appropriation in my favor."

"Nothing can deprive you of your rights as a dowager, and of a title the last will of Albert placed at your disposal."

"Nothing can prevent me from renouncing them. Albert was aware that I wished to be neither rich nor a countess."

"The world will not permit you to renounce them."

"The world! ah! that is precisely the point I wished to get at. The world will not comprehend Albert's love nor his family's kindness to such a poor girl as I am. It would be a reproach to his memory, a stain to your life—it would make me ridiculous, perhaps disgrace me. I repeat, the world will understand nothing that has passed between us. The world must always be ignorant of this, madam, as your servants are. Porpora and the doctor are now the only confidants in this secret marriage—and neither have, nor will divulge it. I will answer for the first, and you can assure yourself of the discretion of the other. Be at ease then, madam—for you can bury this secret with you, and the Baroness Amelia never will know that I have the honor of being her cousin. Forget, then, the scenes of the last hour of Count Albert's life, and let me only bless him and be silent. You have tears enough to shed, without my adding to your sorrow and mortification, by reciting my existence to you as the widow of your child."

"Consuelo," said the Canonesse sobbing, "remain with us. You have a noble heart and strong mind. Do not leave us."

"That would be the wish of my heart, which is devoted to you," said Consuelo, receiving Wenceslawa's caresses with great emotion.

"I cannot do so, without our secret being known, or guessed at, and that amounts to the same. The honor of your family is dearer to me than life. Let me wrest myself from your arms without any delay or hesitation, and thus do you the only service in my power."

The tears the canonesse shed at the conclusion of this scene,

relieved her from the burden which oppressed her. They were the first she had shed since her nephew's death. She consented to the sacrifices of Consuelo, and by her confidence proved that she appreciated her noble resolution. She left her to tell the chaplain of it, and to induce Supperville and Porpora to be silent about the marriage.

CONCLUSION.

CONSUELO, finding herself at perfect liberty, passed the day in wandering about the chateau, the garden, and the environs, in order to revisit all the places that recalled to her Albert's love. She even allowed her pious fervor to carry her as far as the Schreckenstein, and seated herself upon the stone, in that frightful solitude which Albert had so long filled with his grief. But she soon retired, feeling her courage fail her, and almost imagining that she heard a hollow groan issuing from the bowels of the rock. She dare not admit even to herself that she heard it distinctly: Albert and Zdenko were no more, and the allusion, therefore, for it was plainly such, could not prove otherwise than hurtful and enervating. Consuelo hurriedly left the spot.

On returning to the chateau towards evening, she saw the Baron Frederick, who had by degrees strengthened himself on his legs, and had regained some animation in the pursuit of his favorite amusement. The huntsmen who accompanied him started the game, and the baron, whose skill had not deserted him, picked up his victims with a deep sigh.

"He, at least, will live and be consoled," thought the young widow.

The canoness supped, or affected to do so, in her brother's room. The chaplain, who had been praying by the side of the deceased in the chapel, made an attempt to join them. He had a fever, however, and at the first mouthful felt sick.—This offended Supperville, who was hungry and had to let his soup grow cold while he went with him to his room; he could not refrain from saying—"Those people have no nerve! There are but two men here—the canoness and the signora!" He soon returned, resolved not to torment himself a great deal about the poor priest, and like the baron played a good part at supper. Porpora was much affected, though he did not seem to be, and could neither eat nor speak. Consuelo thought of the last meal she had eaten at the table between Anzoletto and Albert.

After supper she proceeded along with her master to make the necessary preparations for her departure. The horses were ordered to be in readiness at four in the morning. Before separating for the night, she repaired to Count Christian's apartment. He slept tranquilly, and Supperville, who wished to quit the dreary abode, asserted that he had no longer any remains of fever.

"Is that perfectly certain, sir?" said Consuelo, who was shocked at his precipitation.

"I assure you," said he, "it is so. He is saved for the present, but I must warn you that it will not be long. At his time of life, grief is not so deeply felt at the crisis, but the enemy merely gives way to return with greater force afterwards. So be on the watch, for you are not surely serious in determining to surrender your rights."

"I am perfectly serious," said Consuelo, "and I am astonished that you do not believe in so simple a matter."

"Permit me to doubt, madam, until the death of your father-in-law. Meantime, you have made a great mistake in not taking possession of the jewels and title-deeds. No matter; you have doubtless your reasons, which I do not seek to know; for a person so calm as you are does not act without motives. I have given my word of honor not to disclose this family secret, and I shall keep my promise till you release me from it. My testimony may be of service to you when the proper time comes, and you may rely on my zeal and friendship. You will always find me at Bareith, if alive; and in this hope, countess, I kiss your hand."

Supperville took leave of the canoness, after having assured her of his patient's safety, written a prescription, and received a large fee—small, however, he trusted, in comparison with that which he was to receive from Consuelo—and quitted the castle at ten o'clock, leaving the latter indignant at his sordidness.

The baron retired to rest, better than he had been the night before; as for the canoness, she had a bed prepared for herself beside Count Christian's. Consuelo waited till all was still; then when twelve o'clock struck she lighted a lamp and repaired to the chapel. At the end of the cloister she found two of the servants, who at first were frightened at her approach, but afterwards confessed why they were there. Their duty was to watch a part of the night beside the young count's remains, but they were afraid, and preferred watching and praying outside the door.

"And why afraid?" asked Consuelo, mortified to find that so generous a master inspired only such sentiments in the breast of his attendants.

"What would you have, signora?" replied one of these men, unaware that he was addressing Count Albert's widow; "our young lord had mysterious relations and strange acquaintances among the world of spirits. He conversed with the dead, he found out hidden things, never went to the church, ate and drank with the gipsies—in short, no one could say what might happen to any one who would pass the night in this chapel. It would be as much as our lives were worth. Look at Cynabre there! They would not let him into the chapel, and he has lain all day long before the door without moving, without eating, without making the least noise. He knows very well that his master is dead, for he has never called him once, but since midnight was struck, see how restless he is, how he smells and whines, as if he was aware his master was no longer alone."

"You are weak fools!" replied the indignant Consuelo. "If your hearts were warmer your minds would not be so feeble;" and she entered the chapel, to the surprise and consternation of the timid domestics.

Albert lay on a couch covered with brocade with the family escutcheons embroidered at the corners. His head reposed on a black velvet cushion, sprinkled with silver tears, while a velvet pall fell in sable folds around him. A triple row of waxen tapers lit up his pale face, which was so calm, so pure, so manly, that a spectator would have said he slept peacefully. The last of the Rudolstadts was clothed, according to family custom, in the ancient costume of his fathers. The cornet of a count was on his head, a sword was by his side, a buckler at his feet, and a crucifix on his breast. With his long black hair and beard, he seemed one of the ancient warriors whose effigies lay thick-

ly scattered around. The pavement was strewn with flowers, and perfumes burned slowly in silver censers, placed at each corner of his last sad resting-place.

For three hours Consuelo prayed for her husband, and watched his final repose. Death had made his features more sad, but so slightly altered them, that often while she admired his beauty, she forgot that he was dead. She fancied even that she had heard the noise of his breath, and when for a moment she left to breathe the perfume of the censers and watch the flames of the torches, she fancied that she saw a vague tremor and heard the light undulation of the drapery. She at once drew near him, and examining his mute mouth and pulseless heart, abandoned all fugitive and desperate hopes.

When the clock struck three, Consuelo arose and imprinted on the lips of her husband the first last kiss of love.

"Adieu, Albert!" exclaimed she, completely carried away by a kind of religious excitement; "now you look directly into my heart. There are no clouds between us, and you know how I love you. You know that I abandon your body to a family who will look on it without emotion, yet I do not on that account extinguish an immortal memory and deathless love of you. You know that no careless widow, but a kind wife, leaves your abode, and that you live forever in her heart. Adieu, Albert! As you said, death has intervened and apparently separated us, only to again unite us in eternity. Confiding in the faith you taught me, certain that you have deserved the blessing and the benediction of God, I shed no tears for you; and cannot think of you under the false and impious image of death. Albert, you were right in saying that 'Death is not'—I feel the truth in my heart."

As Consuelo spoke, the curtains, which were at the back of the catafaco, became visibly agitated, and opening, at once exhibited Zdenko's pale face. She was frightened at first, having always looked upon him as her mortal enemy. There was, however, in his face such an expression of gentleness, that when he reached out his rough hand, she could not but clasp it.

"Let us swear peace over his coffin, my poor child," said he with a smile; "you are a real daughter of God, and Albert is satisfied with you. Go! now he is happy and sleeps kindly. I have forgiven him, you see, and come back as soon as I saw he was asleep—now I will not leave him. To-morrow I will take him again to the cavern, and we will talk of Consuelo. *Consuelo de mi alma*, go to sleep, my child—Albert is not alone. Zdenko is, and always will be with him. He is happy with his friend—misfortune is borne away, evil is destroyed, and death is overcome. The 'thrice-blessed day is come. 'Let the one who has been injured, salute you.'"

Consuelo could bear no longer the infrantic joy of the poor madman. She bade him an affectionate farewell, and when she opened the door of the room let Cynabre rush to his old friend, who had called and whistled for him.

"Come, Cynabre—I will conceal you under your master's bed," said Zdenko caressingly, as if it had been his child. "Come, Cynabre, here all three of us are, and we will never part again."

Consuelo went to awaken Porpora. She then went on tiptoe into the room of Count Christian, and passed between his bed and Wenceslawa.

"Is it you, my daughter?" said the old man, without any exhibition of surprise; "I am glad to see you. Do not awaken my sister, for she is sound asleep, thank God! Go, sleep yourself. I am calm. My son is saved, and will soon be well."

Consuelo kissed his white hair, his wrinkled hands, and hid the tears, which might perhaps have destroyed his illusion. She dared not kiss Wenceslawa, who, for the first time in three weeks, slept soundly.

"God has terminated grief," said she, "by its very excess; may they long be weighed down by the heathful burden of fatigue!"

A half hour afterwards Consuelo, the heart of whom was crushed at the idea of leaving the noble-hearted old man—passed, with Porpora, through the portcullis of the Giants' Castle, without even remembering that the vast mansion, the grates and bars of which had enclosed so much suffering and so much wealth—had become the property of the Countess of Rudolstadt.

THOSE of our readers who are too wearied from having followed Consuelo through all her dangers and perils, now may rest. Those who yet have courage to venture farther—in another romance just issued, in uniform style to this volume, entitled "THE COUNTESS OF RUDOLSTADT,"—will read the story of the sequel of her wanderings, and of what became of Count Albert after his death.

THE END

